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HUMILIS CONFESSIO : *The Saints united Confession, in
Disparagement of their own Righteousness.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd (summarily) at the Tuesday-
Evening Lecture in *Brattle-Street*,
Boston, Jan. 30. 1749, 50.

REPRESENTING

The commonly receiv'd PROTESTANT Sense & Use of two
Scripture-Passages, which depreciate all our personal
Righteousnesses, under the Comparison of *filthy Rags*, and
of despicable *Dung*.

IN

Opposition to POPISH Abuse and Calumny.

By *Thomas Foxcroft, M.A.*

One of the Pastors of the Old Church in *Boston*.

*Hæc est Hominis vera Sapientia, IMPERFECTUM esse Se
nosse.---* HIERON. adv. Pelag.

*Ad VIRTUTIS Perfectionem pertinent etiam ipsius IMPER-
FECTIONIS & in veritate Agnitio & in humilitate Con-
fessio.* AUGUST.

Our very *Virtues* may be a *Snare* to us.--- No Man's Case so
dangerous, as his, whom Satan hath persuaded, that *his own
Righteousness* shall present him pure and blameless in the Sight
of GOD.--We acknowledge a dutiful *Necessity* of doing well ;
but the meritorious *Dignity* of doing well we utterly renounce.
R. HOOKER, Eccl. Pol.

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The Saints united *Confession,*

In *Disparagement* of

their own Righteousness.



ISA. LXIV. 6.

---All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags.---

Compar'd with

PHIL. III. 8, 9.

---And do count them but Dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law.---

*****HO' it be a little uncommon, to bring two Portions of Scripture, situated at such a Distance in the Bible, for the Text or Argument of one Discourse; yet as these Passages, not only have something of a similar Sound, but have generally been judg'd to have very much the same Meaning; and as Expositors, however varying in their Comments on the one and the other, in Correspondence to their differing Views of the Context, and their differing Schemes in Divinity, have nevertheless consider'd them as nearly parallel Scriptures, of
much

The Saints ~~Admitted~~ Confession,

much the same Import, and capable of the same Application and Use in Religion : therefore I have tho't it no Improprity, to place them in Connection at the head of this Discourse, in Order to compare them together, and discover the true Sense of the one by that Light the other reflects upon it ; by which Means we shall see how the *Prophet* and the *Apostle*, and so how both the Old Testament and the New, concur in pouring Contempt on the personal *Righteousness* of Man, and disparaging all the moral Attainments, even of the *Best*, as well as Worst of Mankind, under some limited Notions and Respects.

Both of these Scriptures ~~seem~~ to have been miserably tortur'd by *Papistical* and other Writers, to pervert 'em to a false Sense, and a wrong and dangerous Use : while yet, in a fair and equitable Construction, they appear subservient to some of the most excellent Purposes in Religion ; to humble the fallen Creature, and exalt the blessed Redeemer ; to rout all the vain Pretences of self-righteous Mortals. ; to conduct Sinners to Christ, as *the End of the Law for Righteousness unto every one that believeth* ; and to excite the *Just* to live by Faith, *doing all in the Name of Christ, while careful to maintain good Works.*

The Prophet ISAIAH (as *Protestants* in general have understood and apply'd his Words) by the Spirit foreseeing some future great Revolution in the Church, composes a prophetical Prayer, wherein this holy Man in the Name of the Converts of Zion makes that lowly Confession, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags.* And the Apostle PAUL, for himself (but therein exhibiting the *communis Sensus Fidelium*, the genuine Sentiment and Spirit of every true Christian) after having confessed in relation to Time past, that he had *counted all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ*, subjoins this further Confession referring to the Time present, *And I do count them but Dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law.*---

It appears to me the principal Scope, as well of the Prophet, as the Apostle, to renounce all Pretensions to *Justification by Works*, and disavow every Plea from *righteous Self* in point of reconciling or ingratiating Worthiness before the Sovereign Lawgiver; to disclaim *Self-Righteousness* in every Shape, and reject all Tho'ts of *standing in the Judgment*, upon the foot of personal Obedience to God's Law, the everlasting Rule of *Righteousness*.--- They both use strong and emphatical Language, that discovers a profound Sense of the absolute Insufficiency of the best *Righteousness* of Men,

tion, for the purpose of intitling them to the special Mercy of God. It seems, taking their Words in such a Reference, they both with equal Expressions of a just Contempt and generous Disdain explode *their own Righteousness*, as altogether inadequate and unavailable to so great a Design: the one resembling it to *filthy Rags*, and the other to loathsome *Dung*. (I stay not to criticise on the Translation, nor mention the Variety of suppos'd Allusions in the Original.) *Self-Righteousness* in all it's Forms and Appearances stands condemn'd and vilify'd here. Even the Saints most perfect *Works of Righteousness*, as respected under certain restrictive Considerations, are all thus depreciated by the inspir'd Prophet and Apostle, yea, have a deep Disgrace thrown upon them by these homely and contemptuous Simile's.--- We have exemplify'd here the agreeing humble Confessions both of the *Jewish Church* and *Christian*, and the Harmony of the Saints of every Age in *acknowledging the Truth which is after Godliness*.--- This is the View I have of these Scriptures, after diligent and impartial Inquiry into their true Meaning: and in this, I think, I have the concurrent Suffrage of the Body of reform'd Churches and Divines.--- However, let us now recollect the varying Glosses of Commentators and Preachers upon these Words, and a little examine into their several Grounds and Reasons.

I. I observe, some interpret both the *Prophet* and the *Apostle* as speaking only of a *Pharisaical* or meer *external Righteousness*: and according to them, 'tis at most but a *Form of Godliness* without the Power, or some Shew of moral Virtue without the Reality, that is here represented in such Terms of Reproach.--- Yet, as there are different Degrees of *Pharisaism*, and Hypocrisy appears in a Variety of Figures, these Interpreters, tho' agreeing in the general Sentiment, are divided about the particular Application of it, and go into a various Latitude of Thought.

1. There are those who so restrain the Meaning of these Scriptures, as to suppose them applicable only to the Case of *grosser Hypocrites*: whose feigned *Righteousness*, they willingly grant, deserves no better Name than that of *Dung*, or *filthy Rags*.--- They own, the Scriptures every where paint the conscious and designing Hypocrite in Characters of Ignominy; and pronounce the *Sacrifices of the Wicked*, tho' pretending to be *Sacrifices of Righteousness*, an *Abomination to the Lord*. To this Purpose they apply those Divine Passages,--- *Bring no more vain Oblations*; -- *I hate, I despise your Feast-Days*; -- *Is it such a Fast that I have chosen?* -- *I will declare thy Righteousness, and thy Works; for they shall not profit*

profit thee.--- Your Works shall not become Garments, neither shall you cover yourselves with your Works : Your Works are Works of Iniquity, &c.-- They own, the most specious Profession and Appearance of Religion, with the Shew of Virtue in some Instances, which Men put on for a *Cloke of Covetousness*, for a Mask to cover their wicked Lusts, and recommend themselves to the good Opinion of the World, if not also to ingratiate themselves with the blessed God, and as it were compound with him for their Sins ; all such pretended *Righteousnesses*, I say, they own to be wretchedly defective, corrupt and polluted, worthy of the most inglorious Names, in the View of the Heart-searching Judge, and of enlighten'd Conscience in reflecting Penitents. This is what some contend to be the whole Amount (particularly) of the *Prophet's* Confession in our Text ; as if he only had in his Eye the *Righteousnesses* (falsely so called) of the vilest Hypocrites, who *sign themselves to be just Men*, while yet in Truth (and for that Reason) they are to be rank'd among the very worst of *wicked Men*.

In this very confin'd Sense, the Church of *Rome* in particular understands the *Prophet's* Words, rejecting the *Protestant* Sense with deep Indignation ; and that, as they think, upon sufficient Grounds in Scripture and Reason, the most plausible of which I will now produce and endeavour to refute. Thus Dr. BISHOP a *popish* Priest (in his Answer to Mr. PERKYN's *Reform'd Catholic*) shews his Opinion, * “ That the holy Prophet speaketh those “ Words in the Person of the *Wicked* ; and therefore (says he) “ they are *madly* applied unto the *Righteous*.” So Cardinal BEL-
LARMINE, the Flower of the *popish* School and Champion of the Church of *Rome*, when he comes to answer what the old *Protestants* used to argue from this Passage in *Isaiab*, premises this Observation. † *Hic plané triumphare sibi videntur Hæretici : hunc enim Locum semper in Ore habent ; cum tamen ad Rem nihil pertineat, &c.* “ Here the *Hereticks* [so he styles the *Protestants*] “ look upon themselves certainly *triumphant* : for they have *this* “ Text *always* in their Mouths ; while yet it's intirely foreign “ to the Purpose.”--- Where, by the Way I observe, we have an ample Attestation to the *Reformers* laying a peculiar Stress on *this* Scripture, as affording a most irresistible Argument against the *Popish* Doctrine of Justification by Works : and tho' I would call no Man upon Earth Master, nor set up the Judgment even of the

* See Dr. ABBOT's Def. of Reform. Cath. p. 388.

† BELLARM. Controv. de Justif. p. 381.

old Protestants for an infallible Standard of Orthodoxy ; yet, without more convincing Reasons than any their Opponents have ever offer'd, I should be loth so much as to seem to betray their Cause or to reflect on their Memory, by giving up so notable a Text, which *they triumph'd in & always had in their Mouths*, into the Hands of their *Papist* Adversaries. However, it may not be amiss, to hear the Grounds of the *PAPIST*'s judging this Text impertinently allerdg'd, and what the *Reformers* say in their own Defence.

The *Romish* Champion assigns “ three Reasons. (1.) Because “ undoubtedly *Isaiab* do's not speak of righteous Men, but “ (*de insignibus Pccatoribus*) of remarkably wicked Men.”--- To invalidate which, the *PROTESTANT* replies ; Certainly this Prophet *Isaiab* was no such wicked Man, and he includes himself, together with other pious Persons in *Israel*, when in the Name of the Church he presents this humble Confession to God, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*. Nor is there any Thing here confes'd, more than is imply'd in this same Prophet's humble Words on a former Occasion, (Chap. 6.) *I am a Man of unclean Lips, and dwell in the midst of a People of unclean Lips*. And the *PROTESTANT* further argues, they can't be profligate Sinners, who are personated by the Prophet in this Confession, because none such can truly (in the Sense intended) plead as in the Context, *Doubtless thou art our Father ;---Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer,--- Return for thy Servants sake--- We are thine---We shall be saved--- Now, O Lord, thou art our Father--- We are the Work of thy Hand, &c.* Nevertheless the *PAPIST* attempts by several Considerations, to support and strengthen this his first Reason why the Prophet should be thought to speak in the Person of very wicked Men. As, “ (1.) Because in the preceeding Context he had said, *Behold thou art wroth, and we have sinned.*” But the *PROTESTANT* sees no Force of Argument in this. For no Man liveth and *sinneth not* ; and God is angry at Sin, wherever he seeth it : He keeps his own Children under a holy Discipline, while in this World, and often chastises the Righteous for their sinful Failings, with a fatherly Displeasure.

The *PAPIST* adds, “ (2.) It is plain that the Prophet speaks in “ the Person of the *Wicked*, from those Words in the following Context, *There is none that calleth upon thy Name, There is none that riseth up and taketh Hold on Thee.*” But the *PROTESTANT* reply's, The Righteous are liable to a sad Decay of Faith and Prayer ; and indeed in the Prayers of the Saints, at best, there's always too little of Love and Zeal to the *Name of the Lord*, and

too little of a *stirring up themselves to take hold on God* : So that in the Account of God's Law and strict rectoral Holiness, their Prayers are as it were *no Prayers*, and at least very frequently are such as scarce deserve the Name even in the Account of Gospel-Grace : Yea, for a Season there may be so much of Formality and Deadness in their praying, as that God interprets it a *not calling on his Name*, a *not taking Hold of him* ; and when Conscience is awaken'd in his backsliding Children, they charge themselves with vile Deficiency in the Duties of Faith and Prayer, they censure and humble themselves for the *Iniquity of their holy Things*, as the Root of all their Defection, and a just Reason of their heavenly Father's correcting them:--- The PAPIST subjoins,

“(3) The Scripture every where speaks *honorably of the Works* “ of *righteous Men*, and asserts their being *well pleasing to God*, as a “ *sweet smelling Savour* : and in this very Chapter *Isaiah* says, *Thou* “ *meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh Righteousness*, &c. Hence (the Jesuite concludes) “ none can suppose him to call the “ *Righteousnesses of Saints filthy Rags* ; unless any one be so “ *deoting* as to imagine that *nafty Things* are pleasing to God, “ and that *filthy Rags* are a sweet Odour to him who is the “ *Fountain of Purity*.” But to this the PROTESTANT reply's, that the Saints Works of Righteousness are not consider'd *absolutely*, when honour'd with these Eulogies, nor are accepted for their own intrinsic Dignity, Purity and Perfection : But they have their Estimate, in the Court of governing Grace, from the pleasing Principle of *Faith*, which is the Spring of them, and are valu'd for the sake of the pleasing *Mediator*, in whose *Name* they are perform'd, with whose *Blood* they are sprinkled and cleansed, and with the sweet Incense of whose *Merits* they are perfum'd. Whereas, strictly in themselves consider'd and view'd in the Glass of the Law, they are full of Imperfection and moral Pollution ; inasmuch that they can't be call'd *good Works*, but in very *lax* Language, and in a *comparative* Sense. To this purpose, that celebrated Note of ORIGEN † upon Luke 17. 10. *Et si omnia fecerimus*, &c. i. e. “ Notwithstanding we have done all Things “ that are commanded, yet have we done *no good Thing*. For “ if our Doings were *truly good*, then were we *not unprofitable* “ *Servants*. But any good Deed of ours is called good (*not* “ *proprie*, *sed abusive*) not of Right, but by *Abuse of Speech*. In “ *Comparison* of other Men's Work's, they are call'd good : but

† See Dr. WILLET's Synop. Pap. 1210. and Bp JEWEL's Def. of Apol. p. 305.

“(quantum

“ (*quantum ad Veritatem, bonum nostrum non est bonum*) in respect
 “ of the *Verity* itself, our good Works are not good.” Agreeably
 St. AUGUSTINE saith well, “ If God would deal with us ac-
 “ cording to our good Deservings, he would find in us *Nothing*
 “ *but what he might condemn.*” So again he saith, “ Our *Righteousness*
 “ in this Life consists rather in the *Remission of Sins*,
 “ than in the *Perfection of Virtues.*”--- Indeed the Saints best
 moral Ornaments, that in the Account of Gospel-Grace are of great
 Price in the Sight of God, nevertheless in the Eye of the Law have
 so much of real Deformity and Impurity attending them, as might
 justly make them an ungrateful Spectacle to a holy God, and a
 very Stench in his Nostrils ; yea, that would actually be the Case,
 were it not for the *Blood of Sprinkling* and the *Robe* of imputed
Righteousness, that cleanses and covers all. Hence, as the Persons
 of the Saints are said to be *made accepted in the Beloved*, so their
Spiritual Sacrifices to be *acceptable to God thro’ Jesus Christ*. It is
 not any Virtue or Value in their Persons or Services, absolutely
 consider’d, that commends them to God and makes them delect-
 able in his Sight : but it’s the Mediation of Christ, in whom
 they have believed and in whom they are view’d as clothed with
 his *Righteousness*, that procures them all their Acceptance and
 Approbation in the Eyes of God. Hence that Speech of BABEL,
 a primitive Father, “ *This is our whole & full rejoicing in God,*
 “ while we confess our selves *destitute of all Righteousness of our*
 “ *own*, that we are *justified by only Faith in Christ.*” And that saying
 of JEROM, another of the Fathers, “ *In Christ Jesus our Lord,*
 “ in whom we have Boldness, and Access (to God) and Confi-
 “ dence thro’ the *Faith* of him : *not thro’ our Righteousness*, but
 “ *thro’ Him* in whose Name our Sins be forgiven.” † So then,
 altho’ the Prophet had just before said in his Prayer, *Thou meatest*
him that rejoiceth and worketh Righteousness, this carries in it no-
 thing at all of real Inconsistency with the Protestant Gloss on his
 following Confession, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags* :
 Nor does it afford Papists the least Shadow of an Argument in
 favour of their Hypothesis, that the Prophet makes this humble
 Confession in the Person of the *Wicked*. Indeed, the *rejoicing*
 spoken of, is a *rejoicing in God our Saviour*, saying (as in Context)
Thou art our Redeemer : Or a *glorying in the Lord*, after that Man-
 ner in which this Prophet describes it (Chap. 45. 17.) *Surely*
shall one say, In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength. ’Tis

† Cited by Bp JEWELL, *ubi supra.*

the Language of *Faith* : and this is an operative obedientia Principle. *Faith worketh by Love* ; and by *Faith*, the Saints of every Age have wrought *Righteousness*. Yet 'tis equally a Principle of *Humility*, laying the Saint low in his own Eyes, and teaching him to entertain low Tho'ts of his own *Works of Righteousness*.

But let the POPISH Disputant go on. " Nor ought it to move us (says he) tho' *Isaiab* seems to speak so *generally*, as to comprehend *all Men* : because this is the Manner of Scripture, to speak of *many*, as if it were *all*."--- However, to this the PROTESTANT has an easy Reply to make. Neither the Analogy of Faith, nor any Thing in the Context, obliges us to construe the Term of *Universality* here in a limited Sense, as extending only to the *Wicked*, in Exclusion of the Righteous. But on the contrary, as there are very apparent Grounds in the Context, to suppose the Prophet's making this Prayer in the Person of the *Righteous*, and consequently *their* making the Confession, in Dispute ; so our Imputation of it to them is justifiable, by the Scripture-Representations of the Saints present State of moral Imperfection, and by a Variety of parallel Examples both in the Old and New Testament. For we often find the Righteous lamenting the Defects and Defilements of their *Works of Righteousness*, as well as deploring the Interruption of their Obedience by *Works of Wickedness* : and accordingly crying to God for pardoning and sparing Mercy, with earnest Deprecations of a judicial proceeding against them. I might instance in *Job*, that perfect and upright Man, and refer you to many Passages of his, to this purpose. So in *David*, the Man after God's own Heart, who abounds with Expressions, of this Import, in his Psalms. And in *Nehemiah*, in *Paul*, with many other Saints on Scripture-Record. But the Time would fail me. There are a Multitude of the Saints Confessions, whose Language implies nothing short of this in the Text, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*.

But to proceed, says the PAPIST, " Another Reason is, because tho' *Isaiab* should speak of *all*, i. e. of that whole People, yet he did not speak of *all* for every Time, but only for that Time when for their consummate *Wickedness* they were doom'd to Captivity in *Babylon*."--- To which the PROTESTANT answers : This Prayer of inspir'd *Isaiab* is indet'd prophetic, and respects a future Time, perhaps in particular that of the *Babylonish* Captivity, or as some think, the Times of the *Messiah*. But still it contains many Things of a common Reference, or general Aspect ; and the Confession in our Text is accommodable to *all* Times of the Church indifferently. For it is founded on

a melancholy Truth, equally applicable to every Age, as to that in which *Solomon* lived, *There is not a just Man upon Earth, who doeth Good, and sinneth not*, even in his good Deeds themselves, as to the Manner of doing them. Nor is there any Time but the Challenge which he makes in his Day, may on the same Grounds be repeated ; *Who can say, I have made my Heart clean ; I am pure from my Sin !* So the Challenge may be apply'd to the Men of every Generation, as well as of that to which *David* belong'd ; *Who can understand his Errors ?* Nor are there any but what at all Times have Occasion to pray with him, *Cleanse me from secret Faults.*

The PAPIST adds, " A third Reason is, because *Isaiah* do's not speak of *all the Works* even of the Wicked, but only of those which they imagined to be *Righteousnesses* ; such as their *Sacrifices, New-Moons, and Rituals* of Worship, wherein they especially placed *Righteousness* : which Observances indeed, for want of being done with a right Intention and in due Manner, are deservedly compar'd to *filthy Rags.*"--- But to this the PROTESTANT replies ; that there is no Colour for such a Limitation ; for the Prophet speaks in *indefinite* Language, his Confession is of *universal* Extent, without any Exception or Reserve, *ALL our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags.* Agreeably I find that Note made upon these Words by Bp JEWELL, an eminent old Reformer : † " Our *Virtue, our Holiness, our Fasting, our Prayers, are filthy, when they come to God's Sight.*" And it's the famous Dr. WILLET'S Observation on the Text : ‡ " The *best Works* we do are somewhat *defiled* with our own Corruption.--- The Prophet's Words are *general* ; *ALL, i. e.* whether the Righteousness of the *moral* or the *ceremonial Law.* The *most righteous Men* in the Earth (says he) have not only their *Infirmities*, and are in Danger to sin daily, but even their *best and most holy Works* are blemished with some *Infirmity*, and have a Smack of Sin."--- Thus the old *Protestants* apply'd our Text to the Saints themselves, and to *all their Works*, their very *purest Works*, even of *Morality*, as well as *Ceremony.*--- However, should we grant what is contended for, that they at most concern only unregenerate *Sinners*, it do's not appear, that such have always been wont to place *Righteousness* in *Rituals*, more than in *Morals.* We find, in that Parable, intended for

† Ser. at the End of his Works, Pag. 215.

‡ Synop. Pap. p. 1028. and 1210.

the Conviction of certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, our LORD who knoweth the Hearts of all Men, describes the *Pharisee* boasting of his moral Attainments, as well as ceremonial Observances, and placing them to the Account of his *Righteousness*. Yea, it's observable, our *Papish* Adversary himself elsewhere * has in Effect, by large Concessions, given up the Plea he makes here. Thus, in explaining that *Righteousness of the Law* which the Scriptures shut out of *Justification*, he produces several Texts, where he tells us, "*Works* are excluded simply, without any Mention of the *Mosaic Law*." And, however inconsistently with his Argument before us, he expressly makes the following remarkable Confession. "The Apostle having to "do (says he) not only with Jews, but also with *Gentiles*, that "boasted of their *Philosophy*, no less than the Jews did of their "Law, We [of the Church of *Rome*] therefore understand "him absolutely to exclude all *Works*, antecedent to *Faith*, as "well the Observation of *Morals*, as of Ceremonies."--- By the *Cardinal's* Leave then, interpreting the *Prophet's* Confession by the Apostle's allow'd Doctrine, we may fairly extend the Comparison of *filthy Rags* to all *Righteousnesses*, of a moral Complexion, as well as ritual. And it follows too, by the same Rule of judging, that since he grants all *Works* indifferently (previous to *Faith*) are rejected, he ought not to have confin'd the *Prophet's* Idea in the Text to the Works of very wicked Men, or gross Hypocrites, that did but practise a little Religion merely in Pretence, in wilful Disguise and with conscious Diffimulation; all Hypocrites and Sinners in *Zion* not being of so abandon'd a Character.

Nor surely may this be allow'd to have been the *Apostle's* View and Meaning in his part of our Text. For it can't with the least Colour of Reason be pretended, that he is personating the worst of wicked Men; since he is here in the direst Language speaking of himself singly: and he never confess'd himself such a foul Dissembler with God or Man, as the vicious and designing Hypocrite; no, but on the contrary, we find him almost on all Occasions vindicating his moral Character from so black a Slur, and even in our Context claiming to have been always an unspotted Example of human Sincerity in his *Jewish* Profession and Practice: nevertheless even this honest moral *Jew* here reports of himself, that when commencing a *christian* Convert, he counted all his *Pharisaical Righteousness*, tho' so untainted, so exemplary

* BELLARM. *de Justif.* p. 90, 91.

and respectable, but as *Levi* and *Dun*, for Christ's Sake. Now doubtless, as there were some other *Pharisees* in his Day alike *undissembling* as he, to all whose *Righteousnesses* the same Characters of Disgrace were equally due: so there might be several like Instances of *Pharisaical* Morality, in the Jewish Church, at the Time *Isaiah* refers to in his prophetic Prayer, which contains this humble Confession, '*All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags* : a Confession surely no less suitable for the most moral Hypocrite among them, than was that of *Saul* the Pharisee, for himself. It appears quite unreasonable then, to understand the Prophet as only speaking in the Person of the grossly wicked; since his Words are as well applicable to others, of a fairer Carriage and even the most unblemish'd Appearance.

Upon such Considerations, I observe,

2. The Generality of *Protestant* Interpreters have extended these degrading Comparisons in our Text to *all the Righteousnesses* of the most refined *Hypocrites* (at least) without excepting the Case of any the exactest Moralist, or most rais'd Devotionist, still unregenerate.

As to the Prophet's Confession, 'tis commonly judg'd by *PROTESTANT* Writers, that he is here prophetically addressing the Throne of Grace in the Church's Name, at some Season of special Awaking and Reformation. And if they be consider'd as now reflecting on their former Doings in Religion, previous to their Conversion, it is acknowledg'd, the Language of their Confession here is but what became *self-judging* Penitents, and indeed is usual with such. For true Gospel-Penitents are wont to *blush* and even *loath themselves* at the Remembrance of those very Devotions and Virtues of theirs, which they once *prided* themselves in; vainly Dreaming they would make their Persons beautiful and amiable in the Sight of God, as well as Man, and would serve for a compleat *Robe of Righteousness*, in which they might stand with Safety before the King of Glory: but now, convinc'd of their manifold Imperfections and Pollutions, their Contrariety to the Rule of Duty in many Regards, and their Shortness of it in all, they lament them as *formally evil*, however good materially, and even *despise* and *renounce* them in Relation to any such Purpose as that of a *justifying Righteousness*. In this Light, they can now look upon their once-boasted *Robe of Righteousness* no otherwise indeed than as *filthy Rags*: defective as *Rags*, or like some torn and scanty Garment, insufficient to cover their moral Nakedness; and corrupt as *filthy Rags*, like a sordid dirty becom'd (as well as tatter'd) Garment, rather polluting to them,

them, than beautifying and recommending in the Eyes of their Heart-searching and Sin-hating Sovereign, while viewing them in the Glafs of his holy *Law*.

Certainly our *Apostle*, in his *Confession* before us, must be own'd an Example of this self-condemning and self-abhorring Frame of Mind ; if we only consider him as therein respecting his former unregenerate Life. For, *after the strictest Sect of the Jews Religion* he had lived a *Pharisee*, and his *Manner of Life from his Youth, as touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, blameless* ; yea, exhibiting a notable *Zeal towards God* (tho not according to Knowledge) and much of Care to keep a *Conscience void of Offence* towards Men.-- However, afterwards upon Reflection being convinc'd that he all this While had not *the Faith of God's Elect*, that *Faith without which 'tis impossible to please God*, he therefore now, since his having it given him to believe in God with a *Faith unfeigned*, revokes his *Pharisaical* Pretension to being *justified by Works*, and censures all his old *Righteousnesses* as deeply deficient, deprav'd, and even detestable in the Sight of God that justifieth ; however inculpable in the View of short-sighted Men, and in the Eye of his own misguided Conscience. He now sees and confesses, that notwithstanding the laudable Confidence of his visible Actions and the uniform Tenor of his Behaviour in the World, under the Influences of natural Conscience, excited and improv'd by a religious Education, his past Life had been polluted with Abundance of moral Evils, tho of a more refin'd Sort ; and that his very best Duties (whether of the ceremonial, or moral Kind) had all been vitiated by *Unbelief* and *secret Hypocrisy*, wretchedly defective and corrupt therefore in a just *Theological* View, and now appearing to his enlighten'd Eyes worthy the Name of *Loss* and *Dung* it self. He now own's that he had all the Days of his *Pharisee-Life* been, as it were, but patching up *filthy Rags* for a Coat of Armour against the *fiery Law*, or (to keep to his own Metaphor) but heaping up *Dung* for a Defence against the Justice of the divine Lawgiver ; and that a holy God might justly have *spread Dung upon his Face* (as the Prophet speaks) *even the Dung of his solemn Feasts and Fasts*, of his heartless Devotions and lifeless Vertues : All which he now renounces with a deserv'd Contempt and no longer places his *Righteousness* in them.-- Thus some understand and apply the Words of the *Apostle* in our Text.

Indeed, there are Interpreters, that from such a View as they've taken of the preceeding Context, do suppose him in our Text but to renounce *Judaism*, as such ; to disclaim that *Righteousness*
which

which was *his own* as under the *Levitical Law* ; his *Righteousness*, which he had as a *Jew* and a *Pharisee*, or a strict Conformist to the Rituals of the *Mosaic Dispensation*. They think, now he was become a *Christian*, he might very well undervalue this as *Loss*, yea, despise it as *Dung*, in Compare with that more excellent *Gospel-Righteousness*, which he had since arriv'd to by the Knowledge of Christ and Obedience to the Faith.--- But it is a Difficulty with them, to conceive how the Apostle should count that Degree of *moral Righteousness* he had attain'd, while a *Jew*, to be any *Loss* or Prejudice and Damage to him : much less can they suppose his Renunciation of *ritual Observances* under the *Law*, fairly to be translated to *moral Attainments* under the *Gospel*, or justly to be consider'd as instructing the *Christian* Professor to count his Duties of Morality no better than *Loss* and *Dung*. But this Difficulty seems to vanish, when we reflect, that these derogatory Names regard *moral Works*, not as *absolutely* consider'd, but under the relative Notion of a justifying *Righteousness*, and as a Man's trusting in them for *Righteousness* hinders him from *submitting to the Righteousness of God by Faith*, without doing which he hazards the Salvation of his Soul.

However, there are others who judge the *Apostle's* Example a proper Object of the *Christian's* Imitation ; and suppose those Characters, odious as they are, which he apply's to *his own Righteousness*, whether in one View or another, justly transferrible to the moral Virtues of Men under a *Christian* Profession, tho' the most substantial and sublime, consistent with an unregenerate State. They conclude the Text truly accommodable to the Case of a *Gospel-Pharisee* ; and scruple not applying to the most refin'd Hypocrite's external Righteousness (ritual, or moral) these depreciating Names of *Loss* and *Dung*. For to this Case they think those Sayings of CHRIST justly referrible, which shut all such out of the heavenly Kingdom, *whose Righteousness exceeds not the Righteousness of the Jewish Pharisees* ; and which characterise these as but *whited Sepulchres*, while *outwardly appearing righteous unto Men* ; yea, pronounce that *which is highly esteemed among Men even an Abomination in the Sight of God*.--- But then, of those in this Way of thinking, there are *some* who can by no Means consent to have such a *Stigma*, as that in the *Prophet's* Confession, apply'd to the *real Righteousnesses of Saints*, to inward vital Religion or true Holiness, however imperfect. And before they think it quite unlikely, that the *Apostle*, tho' justly counting his *Pharisaical Virtues*, before Conversion, but *Loss* or

Detriment for *Christ*, should now after Conversion and when in *Christ* account his *Evangelical Graces* likewise still but Detriment or *Loss*, and very *Dung* : especially as they don't observe, that the Writings of this *Apostle*, or other Parts of Scripture, any where else, represent true *Gospel-Holiness* under these debasing Appellations, or any the like Characters of Discredit and Diminution ; but rather every where asserting its Utility, its Excellency, its Importance, yea, its absolute Necessity and indispensable Obligation, and constantly speaking of the Believer's *Works of Righteousness* in all the Language of Regard and Applause.

Nevertheless, there are *other* Divines, of equal Reputation for Piety, Learning and Judgment, who think they may consistently carry the Sense of the Text even to *that* Length ; and supposing all Objections fairly answerable, do maintain, that both the *Prophet* and *Apostle*, when speaking of such *Righteousnesses* as were but like *Dung* and *filthy Rags*, did verily design *their own* real *Righteousnesses*, as sincerely obedient Believers ; and by Parity of Reason, the inherent *Righteousnesses* of all other Saints ; so reflecting a Sort of Odium on all the personal *Righteousnesses* of Man,--- but this only under some particular Respects and with special Limitations, that they had in View.

Which brings me to observe, under the other general Head,

II. Many pious judicious Expositors and Preachers, especially in the first Times of the *Reformation* from *Papery*, have interpreted both the *Prophet* and the *Apostle*, in our Text, as having their Eye more immediately to the personal *Righteousnesses* of real *Saints*, tho' only under certain determinate Ideas and *restraining* Considerations ; and in those particular limited Views, applying to *true Holiness* itself, as subsisting in and exerted by imperfect Men, the ignominious Names of *Dung* & *filthy Rags*.

Indeed I can't find that any of them do (*as they be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say* is the meaning) understand our Text, in one or other of it's Parts, to deny either the actual Existence of all true Holiness in Believers, or all Use and Advantage of it to them, or it's Necessity, or it's Obligation : And therefore don't understand them to stigmatise the Saints personal *Righteousness* unlimitedly, under every Consideration of it. Accordingly when *Protestants* apply these Names of Reproach in our Text to true inherent *Righteousness*, they never mean to disparage it *absolutely* and *irrespectively* : No verily, but always in a restrain'd qualify'd Sense only, as viewing it under certain
Comparisons,

Comparisons, or under certain special *Relations*, and having a Place falsely assign'd it in some particular *Account*, from which the Scripture exempts and intirely excludes it. 'Tis a known and approv'd Distinction, applicable in the present Case, that of *dictum simpliciter & secundum quid*; and to argue from the latter to the former, tho' too common in ill-natur'd Wranglings, is a Fallacy and Abuse, which every fair Reasoner will avoid with Scorn: Yet this is very much the Manner of arguing our *Papish* Adversaries use with us, in their angry Debates upon the Meaning of our Text. Because *PROTESTANTS*, in Confutation of the *ROMISH* Error concerning *Justification by Works*, have alledg'd the Passages before us as asserting the Saints *Works of Righteousness* to be all *imperfect* and *polluted*, tinetur'd with the Remains of innate Corruption, as well as interrupted with frequent Commissions of Sin, all which *defile the Man* and debase his moral Character; from whence they judge it a necessary Consequence, that *such Works* can have no intrinseck Worth any Way equal to the Design of Men's *Justification* before God: therefore *Papistical* Writers, I find, make hideous Exclamations against them, as abominably wresting these Parts of Scripture, and indeed contradicting the whole Tenor of the holy Bible: And these Writers having first misrepresented that as spoken *simply and absolutely*, which Protestants say but *comparatively*, or *respectively* to a particular Case, they then proceed to Charge the *Protestant* Doctrine with many odious *Absurdities*, and excuse it not from *Blasphemy* it self. † They make loud Remonstrances against it, as equally ridiculous, pernicious, and impious. They anathematize it as one of the worst Heresies, the Christian Church was ever infected with. They represent it as horridly derogating from the Honour of God's moral Government, from the Perfection of Christ's Work of Redemption, from the Glory of the Spirit's Work of Sanctification, and so from the Credit of the whole Christian Revelation; as tending to undermine all Religion, to evacuate the Law & subvert the Gospel; by debauching Men's Principles and Manners, by confirming Infidels in their Aversion to Christianity, by hardning hypocritical Professors in their guilty Neglects of moral Duty, and by stumbling sincere, but weak, Believers; discouraging their Pursuits of Virtue, shaking their Hopes, and disturbing the Comforts they feel in themselves from a Consciousness of their so walking as to

† Vid. BELLARM. *de Justif.* Pag. 369, Pag. 90. & *alibi*. So Dr. BISHOP's Epist. to K. JAMES. Vid. Bp ABBOT's Ans. p. 38, & 134.

please God and secure their own Happiness.--In all the Language of Severity and Scorn therefore, yea, with railing Accusation, I find these *Papish* Writers rejecting and inveighing against the *Protestant* Construction and Application of these Passages in our Text: while what we produce them for Proof of, is only the Necessity of an *imputed Righteousness*, grounded on the Impossibility of *justification* by any *Righteousness of our own*, which we apprehend fairly deducible from these Scriptures; forasmuch as we are here assur'd, *all personal Righteousnesses* of Men are so very imperfect, & so debased by polluting Mixtures of moral Infirmity & Corruption, that these *Righteousnesses* themselves need the Blood of *Christ* to wash away their Defilements, and the Mantle of *his Righteousness* to cover their Failures: so far are they from absolutely pleasing God (*ex propria Dignitate*) by any Worth of their own, and consequently from being qualify'd to be *justifying Righteousnesses* in his Sight.---This, This is the heinous Doctrine, which awaken'd the Vengeance of *ROME* against the *Reformers*, and bro't such a Flood of Obloquy upon them, as wicked Slanders of Religion and virtual Murderers of all Morality, as grossly Ignorant in the Scriptures, or perversely abusing the sacred Text, and venting even Blasphemy against it.

But to support these invidious and defamatory Charges, the very Champion of the *Romish* Cause, with all his Powers of Reason and Treasures of Learning, could only produce the most impotent Pleas (and none since seem to have produced any better) nor could offer so much as any Shew of Argument, that I can observe, besides what is grounded on a palpably *forc'd* Sense of the Text, and an evidently *false* Representation of Fact, in Relation to the *Protestant* Construction and Use of it.---Neither have *Protestants* been wanting in the just Vindication of themselves against this disingenuous and abusive Treatment from the *Romish* Adversary: but have often appear'd in their own Defence, have stated and defended their Opinion without Disguise and with superior Strength of Reasoning, solv'd all the Difficulties and Objections thrown in their Way, and said abundantly enough for ever to silence the unreasonable Clamour against them. I have thought therefore, it might answer a valuable End, that would richly compensate the Labour, to review the *Papish* Controversies on this Occasion, and collect some Things (for a Specimen) out of those large and excellent Defences, which *Protestants* have made long ago, of their Interpretation and Use of these Passages in our Text, against the Cavils and Criminalities of *Jesuitical* Sophisters; that if any under a *Protestant* Profession

Profession should be found siding with the Church of *Rome* and pleading a *Papish* Cause, in censuring and opposing (on no better than *Papish* Principles and Reasons) the *Protestant* Notion of our Text commonly receiv'd among us, such may be put to the Blush and others put on their Guard, by discerning whence the Opposition takes it's Rise and whither it leads. For at *Rome* it commenc'd, and for ought I can foresee, *there* it must terminate.

In the first Place then,

As to that Part of our Text, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*, I find the *PROTESTANT* Application of this to the real *Righteousnesses* and moral Virtues of *good Men* exploded by *PAPISTICAL* Writers in general, and by some of 'em both ridicul'd as *absurd* and curs'd as *blasphemous*.---But the feigned Blasphemy vanishes and the pretended Absurdity disappears, when *Protestants* come to make their Defence (as is commonly the Manner with them) by stating truly *their* Construction and Use of the Text, by examining the *Context*, and comparing *spiritual Things with spiritual*.

According to the current Sense of the *Reformers* (as already observ'd) the Prophet in our Text represents the *Church of the living God* (not the *Wicked*, as *Papists* imagine, but the *Godly*) making this humble Confession, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*. And the Doctrine they found upon it, is principally this: That the *Saints*, conscious of remaining Corruption in themselves, of many Sins staining their Lives, and much moral Imperfection polluting and blemishing their very best Works, do therefore renounce all *Dependence* on their own personal *Righteousnesses*, for a *Title to special Mercy* and *Justification before GOD*; and in Relation to such a Purpose, do indeed account them but as *filthy Rags*.--The *PROTESTANT* Opinion is, that this undervaluing Resemblance, in the Prophet's Intention, reaches to *all Works*, as well of a *moral*, as a *ritual Aspect*, and as well *subsequent*, as antecedent to *Faith*. For since the fairest Duties of *Morality*, even after Conversion, are not so pure and perfect, as to be intirely faultless before God, nor can atone for their own Faults or at all excuse them, much less merit a Reward, but even need a *Pardon* of their immoral Defects, and leave us absolutely dependent on the meritorious Obedience and propitiating Blood of the *Mediator*, for their *Title* to Acceptance and Approbation with God; therefore *PROTESTANTS* in old Time used to conclude, we may with the utmost Propriety and Pertinence extend this Character of *filthy Rags* further than to Works (ritual or moral) done before Conversion, and apply it to the very best Works of real Christi-

ans

and, as consider'd under the formal Notion and Design of *Righteousnesses*, to *justify* them in the Sight of God, against the Accusations of his violated Law and the Challenges of his offended Justice.

However, to obviate a vulgar Prejudice, let it be noted here; while they thought the Saints moral *Righteousnesses* shut out of the *Office of justifying* (as they were wont to speak) and as well from the Exigence of the Case, as in Honour to the *Priestly Office* of the Mediator, pleaded strenuously for an *imputed Righteousness*, even that which is of God thro' *Faith* only, as the sole Ground, Matter, or objective Reason of *Justification* before God; yet still (whatever their POPISH Adversaries insinuated, to blacken their Reputation and raise a Cloud on their Doctrine) the *Reformers* were as far as any in the World from casting the least Slight on the blessed SPIRIT in his Office as *Sanctifier*; but ever asserted the absolute Necessity of subjective Grace (without which they deem'd Religion, in its most plausible Appearances, but an empty Name) ever proclaim'd *the Righteous* more *excellent* than his Neighbour; and ever pronounc'd *inherent Righteousness* greatly *beneficial*, in its due Place, and in Relation to those special *Ends*, for which the Gospel requires it. They highly honour'd real *Holiness*, as the Result of Divine Election, the Purchase of Christ, the Product of the Spirit, the Image of God, and the moral Glory of human Nature, the Evidence of a pardon'd State and the Earnest of eternal Life, the Beginning of Heaven upon Earth, a sure Principle of Happiness to the Subjects of it, and a singular Blessing to the World. Nevertheless, in perfect Consistency (as they thought) with all due Honours to it in every such View, they constantly affirm'd this *inherent Righteousness* to be universally so imperfect in its Degree, attended with so many sinful Failings in its daily Exertments, and allay'd with such frequent grosser Pollutions of Life, even in the perfectest Saint here below, that it can by no Means sufficiently answer the End of a *reconciling* and *justifying Righteousness*, nor safely be confided in for a Title to God's special Mercy, or for Security against the Arrests of his Law and Justice. Pursuant to this, they thought, that altho' as a Characteristick of the pardon'd and justify'd Man, and in point of Qualification or capacitating Disposition for enjoying the Privileges of such, as well as in regard of its Subserviency to the Redeemer's Kingdom and Glory, moral Righteousness be *an Ornament of great Price in the Sight of God*; yet still, consider'd under the formal Notion of a *justifying Righteousness*, or under any Notion of a procuring Cause, effective

effective Means or objective Reason of *Peace with God*, it is really of *no Price* at all in his Sight, but useless and worthless as *filthy Rags*.--- Now 'tis only in this limited *relative* Notion, or else in a meer *comparative* View, that *Protestants* have suppos'd the Saints *Righteousnesses* disparag'd by the Prophet under this Name of Reproach.

Indeed I find some later *Protestant* Expofitors, for the fake of obviating Prejudices and avoiding Difficulties, have chosen to put a *personal* Sense on the Word *Righteousnesses* (supposing, by a Figure in Speech, the *Abstract* put for the *Concrete*) and understanding the Prophet to intend *righteous Men*, they think that by *filthy Rags* is only suggested the forlorn and abject *Condition* of God's People, at the Time this propheticall Prayer refers to.--- But, reserving all due Respects to the Inventors of this Construction, I may modestly say, it seems rather ingenious, than solid and judicious : Nor see I the Necessity or Expediency of departing from the commonly receiv'd Notion of the Text, which our *Protestant* Fathers, reforming from *Papery*, laid such extraordinary Weight upon, and made such perpetual Use of (*triumphing in this Text, and having it ever in their Mouths*) as furnishing them with a very powerful Plea in Opposition to the *PAPAL* Doctrine of *Justification by Works*.

However, it mayn't be improper to observe here, I find the *PROTESTANT* Writers commonly defending their *general* Construction of this Scripture by explaining it in sundry *particular* Senses'; and these are reducible to *two*, the one *Comparative*, and the other relative to *Justification* : which I shall now take some Notice of distinctly.

1. They vindicate their applying the Character of *filthy Rags* to the moral *Righteousnesses* of Saints themselves, by pleading that none will deny their deserving this disgraceful Name, if view'd in a *comparative* Light.--- And 'tis certainly not unusual in Scripture-Language, to call Things, in their Nature valuable, by *diminutive* Names, or put *detracting* Characters upon 'em, *comparatively* speaking. Thus, the *Jewish* Rituals are intituled *weak and beggarly Elements*, perhaps in Comparison with the superiour Institutions of the Gospel. Besure, when the Apostle was running down the Dispensation of *Moses*, and applying to it some Terms of great Disparagement, he explains himself by saying, *Even that which was made glorious, had NO Glory in this Respect, by Reason of the Glory that excelleth*.--- So here, the Prophet's Confession, I suppose, will by universal Consent admit of a *comparative* Sense.

Even *Papists*, as well as *Protestants*, agree, that the most exalted moral *Righteousness* in the World must appear but as *impure Rags*, if view'd in the infinitely transcendent Light of God's *holy Face*, or compar'd with the supreme Standard and Origin of all Perfection and Purity. This perhaps might in Part be *Bp JEWEL's* View, in that Passage of his before recited. For having occasionally made the Remark, that "in God's Sight the *Stars* are *unclean*," he brings in the Words of our *Text*, with this Gloss upon it "Our *Virtue*, our *Holiness*, &c. are *filthy*, when they come to God's Sight." And I find the great Cardinal of *Rome* himself expressly making this Concession. † "So great (says he) is the Purity, and Sublimity of God's *Righteousness*, that all the *Righteousness* of Men and Angels, compar'd with that, appears but UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. Just as a Candle, tho' discernibly shining in the dark, yet placed in the Rays of the Sun is extinguish'd, or as the brightest Stars disappear in the Day-Light : So in Comparison with God, all human Purity is as it were IMPURITY, and all our Beauty but Deformity." Accordingly he quotes with Approbation that Saying of *AUSTIN*, *Cujus Participations justis sunt, ejus Comparatione nec justis sunt*. That is, The *Righteous* lose their Character, and appear UNRIGHTEOUS, upon a Comparison with the divine Fountain, from whence they derive their Righteousness. Agreeably, I find the Cardinal applying in this Light several Passages in the Book of *JOB*. "I know, it is so of a Truth : but shall Man be righteous in Comparison of God !-- Shall mortal Man be just compar'd with God !"--- So then, by the Adversary's own free Concessions here (whatever he has elsewhere pretended to the contrary) there's no Need of supposing, that the *Prophet's* Concession respects only the *Wicked* ; but may properly enough be refer'd to the *Righteous*, in a comparative Sense. And surely there's none will deny, that all our *Righteousnesses* are as *filthy Rags*, when bro't into Comparison with the *Righteousness* of God. Verily one such Glimpse as holy *Job* saw of God's tremendous Holiness, might well make any Man cry out as he did, *Behold, I am VILE ! I abhor my self*. So the holy Prophet *Isaiah*, when a Beam of the divine Glory flash'd in his Eyes, instantly losing Sight of all his own *Righteousness*, he broke out in that Language (equivalent to his Words in our *Text*) *Who is me, for I am undone, because I am a Man of UNCLEAN Lips*.-- Now after this,

† *BELLARM. de Justif. p. 381, 389.*

where is the *Blasphemy*, or where the *Absurdity*, of ascribing to the Saints themselves that humble Confession, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags* !

And view'd in other comparative Lights, *Protestants* have pleaded, that the Saints personal *Righteousness* loses all its Purity and Glory. Thus, compar'd with that shining Array of habitual Rectitude and Innocence, which adorn'd *Adam* originally in Paradise, what is the most compleat and glittering Garb of moral *Righteousness* now on Earth, but as broken Shreds of *Righteousness*, and these defiled and blacken'd with Sin ?--- Or compar'd with the *Law of our Nature*, the primitive Standard of actual *Righteousness*, what is the most consummate *Righteousness* of imperfect Saints, but as *filthy Rags* ? Verily 'tis at best as *Rags* ; or as a Garment, not only short of the true Measure, but full of shameful Scissures, its several Parts scarce hanging together ; and this inconsistent ragged Garment, not only blemish'd by its own Defects and Rents, but *soil'd* too by attendant Lusts and Corruptions.--- Or compar'd with the *reveald* Rule of our Obedience, the *Law of the Lord* which is *perfect*, his written *Word* which is *very pure*, is not the compleatest *Righteousness* of the most improv'd Saint upon Earth, but scanty and imperfect, yea, even as *filthy Rags* ?--- Or compar'd with the Purity and Perfection of the Saints themselves in their *heavenly* State, what is the highest Perfection and Purity of Saints in this their *Earthly* Condition, but Imperfection and Impurity ? The *Righteousness* of *some* real Saints loses its Brightness, when *only* compar'd to that of *others*, even now in this evil World, who shine with superior moral Attainments : but what is the *Righteousness* of the most finish'd Saints on the Earth to that of glorify'd Saints in the World of spotless Purity and Perfection ? In this comparative View, surely *all* our *Righteousnesses* appear as *filthy Rags*.

In a Word, at least, this is their due Character, if compar'd with the *Righteousness* of *CHRIST*, the admirable Pattern and Source of *all* our *Righteousnesses*. In Comparison with that *Righteousness*, which he exemplify'd in our Nature and Stead, and which is graciously imputed to Believers (call'd in Scripture *the Righteousness of God*, from its Divine Author and immediate Subject, God incarnate, as well as from its Divine Institution and Acceptance) in this Light surely the Saints own personal *Righteousness* at best appears full of uncomely Defects & with an ugly Hue : not as the other, a *fine Linen Robe white and clean*, but rather like a dark, coarse, rotten, *leprous* Garment. Verily there's an inconceivable Disproportion between the Saints own

inherent Righteousness, and that of Christ *imputed* to them.-- I will briefly state the Resemblance and Disparity between them, in the agreeable Words of the excellent Bp BARLOW, † who understands the Prophet in our Text as speaking, not *absolutely*, but *comparatively*, and in Relation to the excelling *Righteousness* of God our Saviour. His Words are ; “ *Isaiah* (confessing his own and his People’s Sins) saith, *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*. So he calls even *his own* inherent *Righteousness*, if compar’d with the absolute and perfect *Righteousness* of CHRIST, by which all his Saints are justify’d. For *this Righteousness* of our blessed Saviour, *imputed* to his Saints, is in Scripture. (*Rev. 19. 8.*) call’d a compleat and intire *Linen-Garment, white and clean*, which (according to *Rev. 3. 18. & 6. 11.*) they have of CHRIST, to *cover their Nakedness*. (It is not an inherent, but an imputed and external *Righteousness*, which as a Robe or Garment *covers their Sins* and moral *Nakedness*. (*Rom. 4. 7.*)--- When Saint *John* says, *imputed Righteousness* is a *Linen-Robe, white and clean*, and *Isaiah* says, *our inherent Righteousness* is *filthy Rags*, the Comparison may stand thus ; the Analogy and Difference thus appear. (1) Our blessed Saviour’s *imputed Righteousness* is an *intire Robe*, or *Linen Garment* (as the Apostle calls it) perfectly *white and clean*, which covers all our Sins and moral *Nakedness*. But (2.) our own *inherent Righteousness* is *as filthy Rags*. (1.) *Rags* only, or broken Fragments (as it were) and little Pieces of *Righteousness*, and no intire Robe : for our many intervening Sins divide and rent it into *Rags*. And (2.) those *Rags* too are not perfectly white and clean, but are *filthy*. Either (1.) in Respect of their *Defects*, which stain them : for, if God should examine them according to the Severity of the moral Law, they would be found defective (at least) in Degree, and be unable to abide the Trial, so as to justify us before God. Or (2.) they are *filthy Rags*, at least *comparatively*, in Relation to the more excellent *Righteousness* of CHRIST.”

But I proceed now to the other particular Sense, in which *Protestants* have usually explain’d and defended their general Confession and Application of the Text. According to them,
2. This Character of Reproach is due to *all Righteousness* of Saints themselves, if consider’d under the Notion of *justifying*

† LETTERS concerning *Justification by Faith* only. p. 165, 166.
Righteousness

Righteousnesses, serving to make our Peace with God, and by their Worth & Virtue securing us against the Challenges of his Law and Justice: Hence believing Penitents tho' laudably zealous of good Works, as excellent in other Views, do renounce all Trust in them, and as it were lose all Value for them, under this Notion of their pacifying the Anger, and winning the Favour of the Divine Lawgiver and Judge.---Here good Works (which spring only from justifying Faith, and so follow Justification) appear quite out of Place and out of Character. Put to this Account, they stand for a Cypher, for Nothing, or worse than Nothing. Being thus misplaced, the Excellency that is in them, as it were, goes away; and here they fall under a just Disparagement.---This was the Opinion of those who have been wont so strenuously to urge this Text in Opposition to Popery.

PROTESTANTS have from the Beginning had warm Contests with the *Romish* Adversary, on that important Question, "What is the MATTER of justifying Righteousness?" (as Mr. Richard Hooker, a celebrated old Protestant expresses it) Or, "What is that Righteousness, by which a Man is justified in the Sight of God?"---Whether his own inherent Righteousness, or that of Christ imputed to him?---The PAPISTS hold for the former, in Opposition to the latter. † One main Ground of their Opinion is a suppos'd Perfection in the Saints Works of Righteousness. These they define to be "Works good in Kind, or in Respect of God's Command, and done with a right Intention": And such Works they call perfect, in Contradistinction to all faulty and defiling Imperfection. For they maintain, "that neither meer innate Concupiscence, nor doing these Works with a defective Love, nor the Intermixture of venial Sins (as they speak) can possibly pollute the Saints good Works."† They observe, "The Scripture in absolute Terms denominates some Men, just, holy, undefiled, perfect:" and in such Men they assert, "there is such true and absolute Righteousness, that in the just Judgment of God, not Punishment, but Glory is due to it."‡ However, at the same Time, to put a fair Gloss on their Opinion, they confess, "that the Reason of this Worthiness in good Works turns wholly upon Grace, results from Christ's Merits, and hither all the Praise is ultimately to be refer'd."* They distinguish, and say, "That FOR which we are justify'd, is the

† Vid. BELLARM. de Justif. p. 125, &c. † JD. *ibid.* p. 368. &c.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 174. * Pag. 413, 414.

“ Merit of CHRIST, as the *meritorious Cause* ; altho’ it be
 “ BY our inherent Righteousness, as the *formal Cause*. ” † And I
 observe, our great Antagonist, in considering it as a Case of
 Conscience, makes several modest Concessions. He grants it a
 “ Point of PRUDENCE, not to confide in our own good Deservings,
 “ but in the alone Mercy of GOD. ” † Yea, he has delivered it in
 the Form of a *Thesis*, or solemn Position, importing his deliberate
 Judgment : “ By Reason of the Uncertainty of our own Right-
 “ teousness, and the Hazard of Vainglory (*TUTISSIMUM est*) it
 “ is acting the SAFEST Part, to repose our whole Confidence in the
 “ alone Mercy of God :--- Eying this only, and in a Manner for-
 “ getting our own good Deservings. ” ‡ --- Thus, the Adversary
 himself, after his long and passionate Pleadings for *Justification by*
Works, has in Effect (by his *Tutissimum est*) retracted all, and given
 up the Favorite-Article of *Papery*. For, as a learned Man †
 observes upon it, “ This his Assertion is directly the Reverse to
 “ his whole Doctrine of *Justification*. ” And in this great Point
 truly lay the very Heart and Centre of all the chief Controversies
 between the Church of Rome and the Reformers.

According to the old PROTESTANTS, there’s no safe Approach
 to God, but in the *Righteousness* of CHRIST imputed and receiv’d
 by Faith. The absolute Necessity of this They tho’t rationally
 grounded on the *Impossibility* of Justification by our own inherent
 Righteousness : for a convincing Proof of which, they con-
 stantly pleaded the *Imperfection* of our best moral Attainments ;
 and for the Evidence of this, they appeal’d to the whole Tenour
 of the sacred Scriptures, to universal Experience and Observation,
 and to the constant Confessions of good Men from Age to Age.
 The Confession in our Text they particularly set an Asterism upon,
 and made much Use of it to establish their Doctrine, in Oppo-
 sition to *Papery*. For, while the *Papists* dreamt of the Prophet’s
 speaking here in the Person of the *Wicked*, these old Protestants
 constantly asserted his doing it in the Name of the *Righteous* ;
 and they considered the Church of God as by this Confession
 expressing a humble Sense of their own Unworthiness, acknow-
 ledging their absolute Dependance on God’s free Mercy in Christ
 to pardon and save them ; and, from a Consciousness of the
 faulty Defects of their own *Righteousness*, disclaiming all Pre-
 tensions, in Consideration of any Worth in them, to *Justification*
of Life, yea, in Relation to this End, even rejecting and despis-

‡ It. p. 127, 128. † p. 419. † p. 424. † *PAIDREUX Leçons*,
 pag. 73. ing

ing them as *filthy Rags*. Hence that eminent old Reformer, Bp JEWEL, thus speaks in one of his Sermons † : “ If we appear in our *own Apparel*, we must despair.--- Let us therefore *put on us Jesus Christ*. Let us cover us under *his Apparel*, as *Jacob* covered himself under the Coat of his Brother *Esaú*; and *so* let us present ourselves before our heavenly *Father*.”--Analogous to which are those Observations and Reasonings of another excellent old Protestant Bp HALL. † “ *We are all as an unclean Thing* (*WE*, saith the Prophet, including even himself) *and all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*.-- That there is an *inherent* Justice in us, is no less certain, than that it is wro’t in us by the Holy Ghost.--- But this being wro’t by him according to the *Model* of our *weak Receipt*, and not to the full Power of the infinite Agent, is not *so perfect*, as that it can bear us out before the Tribunal of GOD.--- Nothing can formally make us just, but that which is *perfect* in it self. How should it *give* what it *hath not*? Now our *inherent* Righteousness, at the best, is in this *Life defective*.--- Tho’ *true*, how should it be *pure*, where *we* cannot but be *faulty*? -- Surely that which is *less than it ought*, is *faulty*.--- To say, that our actual Justice, which is *imperfect* thro’ the Admixture of venial Sins, ceaseth not to be both true and (in a sort) *perfect* Justice, is to say, there may be an *unjust Justice*, or a *just Injustice*; that even muddy Water is clear, or a leprous Face beautiful.--- It must be only under the *Garment* of our *Elder Brother*, that we dare come in for a *Blessing*: his *Righteousness* made ours by *Faith*, is that we are justified by in the Sight of God. This Doctrine is that which is blasted with a *Tridentine* Curse.--- It is not the *Logick* of this Point, we contend for; it is not the *Grammar*; but it is the *Divinity*: What is *that* whereby we stand acquitted before the righteous Judge? Whether our *inherent* Justice, or Christ’s *imputed* Justice apprehended by *Faith*? The Divines of *Trent* are for the former: All *Antiquity* with us for the latter.--- The sweet and passionate Speeches of St. *Austin* and St. *Bernard* alone would fill a Book: neither can any reformed Divine either more *disparage* our *inherent* Righteousness, or more magnify and challenge the *Imputed*.”--

And says the famous Episcopal HOOKER, in his *Discourse of Justification*.|| “ Concerning the Righteousness of *Sanctification*,

† At the End of his *Works*. p. 215. † In his Book, intituled, *The old Religion*. Chap. 5. || At the End of his *Eccl. Pol.* pag. 495, 496. 509.

• we deny it not to be *inherent*; -- only we *distinguish* it, as a
 • Thing different in Nature, from the Righteousness of *Justifi-*
 • *cation*. We are righteous, the one Way, by the FAITH of
 • *Abraham*; the other Way, except we do the WORKS of *Abra-*
 • *ham*, we are not *righteous*.-- We see how far we are from the
 • perfect *Righteousness of the Law*: the little *Fruit* which we have
 • in *Holiness*, it is (God knoweth) CORRUPT and UNSOUND; we
 • put no Confidence at all in it.-- The Apostle saith, *God made*
 • *him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the*
 • *Righteousness of God in Him*.-- Let it be counted our Folly, or
 • Frenzy, or Fury, whatsoever, it is *our Comfort* and *our Wisdom*,
 • we care for no Knowledge in the World, but this, That *Man*
 • *hath sinned* and *God hath suffered*, That *God hath made himself*
 • *the Son of Man* and *Men are made the Righteousness of God*. You
 • see therefore that the Church of ROME, in teaching *Justifica-*
 • *tion by inherent Grace*, doth PERVERT the TRUTH of CHRIST.--
 • It is a *childish Cavil*, our Adversaries do so greatly please them-
 • selves with, exclaiming that we tread all Christian *Virtues* under
 • our Feet, because we teach that *Faith alone justifieth*: where-
 • as by this Speech we never meant to exclude either *Hope* or
 • *Charity* from being always *joyned*, as inseparable *Mates*, with
 • Faith, in the *Man that is justified*, or *Works* from being *added*,
 • as necessary Duties, required of every *justified Man*; but to
 • shew, that FAITH is the *only Hand* which putteth on Christ unto
 • Justification, and CHRIST the *only Garment*, which, being se
 • put on, covereth the Shame of our defiled Natures, hideth the
 • Imperfection of our Works, and preserveth us blameless in the
 • Sight of God; before whom, otherwise, the *Weakness* of our
 • Faith were Cause sufficient to make us culpable, yea, to shut
 • us out of the Kingdom of Heaven, where nothing that is not
 • absolute can enter! -- If any Man had a *perfect Faith* (as
 • the same Author argues in another Place †) what doth let
 • why that Man should not be *justified* by his own *inherent Right-*
 • *eousness*? For Righteousness inherent, being perfect, will
 • justify.--- And Faith being perfect,-- what is there to exclude
 • other Christian *Virtues* from the like *Perfection*? And then
 • what *Need* have we of the *Righteousness of CHRIST*? His
 • *Garment* is *superfluous*: we may be *honorably cloth'd* with our
 • own *Robes*, if it be thus.'

† Serm. of Cert. & Perpet. of Faith in God's Elect.
 Eccl. Pol. pag. 528.

According to the *old Religion* of PROTESTANTS, it appears, the *Righteousness* of CHRIST *imputed*, and received by *Faith*, is eminently (tho' not exclusively of habitual Righteousness, as its inseparable Attendant, or of actual Righteousness, as its necessary Consequent) *the Righteousness of the Saints*, represented in Scripture under the Emblem of *white Raiment*, a *white and clean Robe*, and call'd the *Wedding-Garment*, the *Robe of Righteousness*, the *Garment of Salvation*: which the God of all Grace hath provided for Sinners (such as we all are by Nature, and such as the Saints themselves must appear, when view'd by the Eye of rectoral Holiness, in the Glass of the Law) to cover their moral Nakedness, and screen them from the Revenges of Justice and the Lashes of Conscience. Those *old Protestants* tho't, "that unless we *put on Christ*, and cover us with his Body and Blood as with a Garment, our *filthy Nakedness* must appear, and nothing remain for us but *Despair*. They judg'd this clearly imply'd in the Prophet's Confession, that *all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*. And they judg'd that in the Prophet DANIEL's Prayer equivalent to this: *We do not present our Supplications before Thee for our own Righteousnesses, but for thy great Mercies*. (Dan. 9.18.) Yea, they thought *Isaiab's* Confession to have been but the Language, constructively at least, of all other eminent Saints on Scripture-Record. They were wont to instance in some corresponding Speeches of *Abraham*, of *Jacob*, of *Job* and his Friends, of *David*, and *Asaph*, and *Ezra*, and *Nebemiah*, with others in the Old Testament; so of *Peter*, of *Paul*, of *James*, of *John*, and others in the New. [For Brevity, I omit the particular Passages refer'd to: Some of 'em have already been cited; and the most of 'em are obvious, to those acquainted with their Bibles.] And when consulting their own *Experience*, with that of other the People of God in their own Times, these *old Protestants* found this bearing Testimony to the Imperfection of their personal *Righteousnesses*, whether habitual or actual; so obliging them to make *Isaiab's* Confession *their own*. By melancholy Experience, they perceiv'd their Obedience daily interrupted and impeded, by the resisting Principle of *indwelling Sin*. They saw deplorable *Flaws*, and Spots of *Filth*, in their purest and most infective *Works of Righteousness*. Nor only in their most perfect Duties of *Morality* saw they Occasion to lament very faulty Imperfections; but complain'd too of a censurable Weakness even in their most vigorous Exercises of *Faith* itself. Which Failures of theirs appear'd, in the impartial Judgment of Conscience, sufficient Matter of just Condemnation to them, should a righteous God

enter into Judgment with his Servants, and be strict to mark Iniquity. So that they dar'd not venture upon an Inquisition by the inflexible Rule of Righteousness, and stand a Trial at the Bar of Justice, under the Shelter of any *Righteousness of their own.* They saw and confess'd *this* Covering too contracted, too deform'd and too defiled, to serve (by any Beauty or Virtue in it self) either to attract the Favour of an offended Lawgiver, or to protect them from the Wrath of Him who is a consuming Fire. In regard to any such Purpose, they saw and confess'd *all their Righteousnesses* to be but as *filthy Rags*, which the fiery Law & incensed Justice of God would burn up in its destroying Flames; had they Nothing more effectual, than their own *purest Religion*, to *cover their Sins*, and make their Persons acceptable in the Sight of Him, whose *Eyes are as a Flame of Fire*, and who is of *purser Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, in whatever Instance or Degree, without infinite Displeasure and Detestation. Upon such Views of the Case, it was the Manner with these *old Protestants*, to strip themselves, as it were, of their own *filthy Garments*, laying them at the Feet of *Jesus*, and to *put on Christ* by Faith, so *cloathing themselves with Change of Raiment*, when they bow'd their Knees before a holy God, and transacted with him in relation to the momentous Concerns of Pardon and Justification.

Truly they confess'd themselves afraid of *going about to establish their own Righteousness*, or even seeming to *seek Righteousness as it were by the Works of the Law.* They saw that the *Law is holy, and just, and spiritual, the Commandment exceeding broad*, and the Demands of Divine Justice (whether in moral or penal Respects) transcending all Possibility of a perfect personal Fulfilment and Satisfaction by them. They saw it above their Power, either to atone for their past Sins, or to obey without Sin for the future. And hence, altho' they knew that *if there had been a Law which could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law*, yet as they by Experience found *the Law weak thro' the Flesh*, and *seeking to be justify'd by the Law* but a vain Pursuit, they therefore *sought to be justify'd by Christ thro' Faith* in his Blood, and looked unto *Jesus*, as the Lord their *Righteousness*, as well as Strength; abjuring *Self*, in every View, not only vicious Self, nor only civil Self, but righteous Self too, in this Affair of Justification before God. They abjur'd every Thing of *their own* in Competition with *CHRIST*, particularly as consider'd in his *reconciling Office*: utterly foregoing *all their Righteousnesses*, as view'd under the Notion of *pacifying* and *recommending Righteousnesses* in the Eyes of an affronted Lawgiver and just Judge.---

Indeed

Indeed I can't find by any Hint in their Writings, that these *old Protestants* allow'd a Place, in this Business of *Justification*, for the Distinction some of late have so warmly espous'd, between a *Law-Righteousness* and a *Gospel-Righteousness* of the moral Kind. Besure, since a perfect immaculate Obedience to the *Law*, in its Rigour, is impracticable in this fallen State of Mankind, they saw no Colour for any Hope of Justification by a (strictly) *Legal Righteousness of our own* : which, if it be not more than the very *Papists* pretend to, yet perhaps is all that some modern *Protestants*, in orthodox Language, appear to renounce. And for ought I can observe, neither did these *old Protestants* see any Room left, even in the mediatorial and infinitely condescending Scheme of redeeming Grace, for a Claim to *Justification* (properly speaking) by an *Evangelical Righteousness of our own*, or *Works of Righteousness* done in Obedience to the Gospel ; considering the Saints moral *Imperfection* in their present State. For they saw the whole Duty of Man according to the moral Law, taken into the System of Divine Precepts in the Gospel, without the Abrogation of any one moral Command, yea, without any Relaxation of the Severity of the moral Rule, or the least Abatement of Obedience in Point of Degree ; but the universal and intire Law, (without Exception of an *Iota*) as a Rule of right Action, abiding in full Force and perpetual Obligation ; not at all made void by Faith, but rather established and enforced by it. And in Consequence of this, they concluded the *Defects* in the Saints Obedience to have the Nature of *Sin* ; not only as being against the original *Law* of Morality, but against the Injunctions of the very *Gospel* itself ; and being thus sinful, therefore needing Divine *Forgiveness*. In which State of the Case, they saw their own *Righteousness*, in every View of it, absolutely insufficient, by any Worth or Excellency in it self, to ingratiate them with an infinitely holy and omniscient Lawgiver ; and altogether unfit to be consider'd as a justifying Righteousness before God, even in the compassionate and gracious Plan of the Gospel.--- But the exceeding Riches of the Grace of God in his Kindness towards us by *Jesus Christ*, the very Mercy of Mercies in the infinitely merciful Scheme of Man's Salvation, these *old Protestants* saw, lay in the Provision of a better *Righteousness* than their own inherent, to answer the End of *Justification*, and Intitlement to God's special Favour, that is, the *Righteousness* of *CHRIST*, imputed to Believers, and covering their Sins from the Eye of vindictive Justice. Even as *David* also describeth the Blessedness of the Man, to whom GOD imputeth Righteousness without Works ; saying,

Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered. This imputed Righteousness they held to be “the most essential Recommendation to Heaven”; the only justifying Righteousness before God, against the Challenges of his Law and Justice, affronted by their Sins and Imperfections; and this they held to be received only by Faith, a true and lively Faith. They held it for Gospel-Doctrine, “that altho’ Faith doth not shut out Repentance, Hope, Love, Dread and Fear of God, to be joined with Faith in every Man that is justified; yet it shuts them out from the Office of justifying,” and so from being joyn’d with CHRIST’S Righteousness to that End: they observed, “that Man cannot make himself righteous by his own Works, neither in Part nor in the Whole; for that were the greatest Arrogancy and Presumption of Man, that Antichrist could set up against God, to affirm, that Man might by his own Works take away and purge his own Sins, and so justify himself. †--- While therefore they honour’d inherent Righteousness in its Place and in Relation to its proper Ends, they dar’d not exalt that (under any Consideration of it, whether as a Legal or Evangelical Righteousness) to a Rivalship with CHRIST’S Righteousness imputed, or to a Co-partnership with this, as the Matter or Ground and objective Reason of Justification before God. They consider’d this Righteousness, which is upon them that believe, as a compleat Robe of Righteousness, perfectly sufficient to secure its End, in point of Justification and Peace with God; not needing the moral Righteousnesses of Men to be tack’d to it for its greater Sufficiency, which are neither fitted to enlarge, nor strengthen, nor beautify it; but rather, as thus advanc’d out of their due Place and apply’d to a wrong Use, they put on the Character of filthy Rags. In reference to Justification, these old Protestants infinitely prefer’d the Righteousness which is of God by Faith; and in this most beautiful white Raiment, the Wedding-Garment, they desired to be found; as knowing, that so they should be found of their Judge in Peace, without Spot and blameless.

I think I’ve now said enough to shew, that the commonly receiv’d Notion of the Prophet’s Words in our Text, as it is agreeable to the Judgment of PROTESTANTS, in Opposition to the POPISH Opinion upon it, so likewise agreeable to the Scope of the Context, justifiable by the general Tenor of Scripture-Doctrine, and applicable to excellent Uses in the Christian Life.

† Church of E. Hom. of Sal.

Nevertheless, after all, it may perhaps contribute to your further Satisfaction and Establishment in the genuine *Protestant* Construction of this Passage in ISAIAH, if I rehearse to you something of that excellent *Defence* of it, which was made by an *old Protestant*, the learned Bp ROBERT ABBOT, in Answer to one Dr. BISHOP, a *Papish Priest*, and in Vindication of the celebrated Mr. PERKINS. †

Mr. PERKINS (in his Book, call'd *The Reformed Catholick*) had advanc'd, among others, this Argument for the Necessity of imputed Righteousness; “*That which must be our Righteousness before GOD, must satisfy the Justice of the LAW, which saith, Do these Things and live. But there is Nothing that can satisfy that Justice of the Law, but the Righteousness and Obedience of JESUS CHRIST. Ergo. --- Now under this Argument, to prove that the Righteousness of the Regenerate & Faithful is not such as that it can answer the Justice and Righteousness required in the Law, Mr. PERKINS alledgeth the common Confession of all, indited by the Prophet ISAIAH, All our Righteousness is a menstruous or defiled Cloth. For if the Righteousness commanded by the Law be most exact and perfect, and no Righteousness is performed by us, but what is by our Weakness and Corruption blemished and stained, then can no Righteousness of ours satisfy the Commandment of the Law.--- To which Dr. BISHOP [the Romish Priest] answereth, that the Prophet speaketh these Words in the Person of the WICKED of that Nation and that Time; and therefore that they are madly applied unto the RIGHTEOUS.*”--[Dr. ABBOT replies] “*Where a Man would wonder, that he should be so mad, as to imagine that Prayer to be made in the Person of wicked Men, or that wicked Men should make Mention of any their Righteousness unto GOD! And as for the Time, it fitteth not the Age where- in the Prophet himself lived; but was prophetically written in Respect of a Time long after succeeding. He foresaw in the Spirit the Desolation of Jerusalem and the Temple and that whole Land; and thereupon putteth himself in the Person of the FAITHFUL, and maketh himself as one of them that should live at that Time. This is very apparent by the Prophet's Words (v. 10.) Thine holy Cities lie Waste, &c.--- This Prayer was to serve for a Direction to the FAITHFUL that then should be, to make their Moan unto GOD, and to intreat*

† DEF. of the *Ref. Cath.* p. 387, &c. With p. 597, 598.

“ Mercy at his Hands. And very answerable to this propheti-
 “ cal Prayer is the Prayer of the Prophet DANIEL, made pre-
 “ sently at that Time [the Time of *Jerusalem's* actual Desola-
 “ tion.] For whereas Mr. BISHOP, to prove that the Prophet
 “ speaketh in the Person of the *Wicked*, alledgeth those Words
 “ (v. 5) *Lo, thou hast been angry, for we have offended, and have*
 “ *ever been in Sin:* the Prophet DANIEL likewise saith (Chap.
 “ 5, 7, 10) *We have sinned and committed Iniquity, and done*
 “ *wickedly: O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto Thee, and unto*
 “ *US open Shame: WE have not obeyed the Voice of the Lord our*
 “ *God, to walk in his Ways, &c.* And whereas he alledgeth
 “ the other Words (Isai. 64. 7.) *There is no Man that calleth upon*
 “ *thy Name, and standeth up to take hold of Thee;* the Prophet
 “ DANIEL in like Manner saith (Chap. 9. 13.) *WE have not*
 “ *made our Prayer before the Lord our God.* Both of them
 “ [*Isaiab and Daniel*] say, *WE have offended, WE have sinned,*
 “ *WE have not prayed,* as shewing plainly that they so spake of
 “ other Men as that they implied *Themselves* also. The Prophet
 “ DANIEL saith of *himself* (Chap. 9. 20.) that in that Prayer
 “ he confessed his own Sins, and the Sins of the People. And
 “ why should the Prophet DANIEL be said to confess *his own*
 “ Sins, and not the Prophet ISAIAH, or those *Just and Faith-*
 “ *ful* in whose Person *Isaiab* spake? Nay, both the one and
 “ the other spake out of the true Affection of the *Faithful* at all
 “ Times, who always find in themselves *Defects and Defaults,*
 “ whereby they find just Cause in Confession of Sins to join
 “ themselves with other Men; even as the Prophet ISAIAH
 “ elsewhere doth (Chap. 6. 5) *Wo is me; I am a Man of pol-*
 “ *luted Lips, and I dwell in the midst of a People of polluted Lips.--*
 “ We cannot doubt but that there were many *faithful* and *godly*
 “ among the Jews at that Time of their Desolation: Yet in those
 “ faithful and godly there was that *Default*, as that God said of
 “ them (Isa. 51. 18.) *There is NONE to guide her, among all the*
 “ *Sons that she hath brought forth.--* The Prophet could not say,
 “ *WE have sinned, WE have all been as an unclean Thing,* with-
 “ out Intendment of *himself.* - And that which the Prophet spake,
 “ did so concern the *Faithful* of that Time and Place whereof
 “ he spake, as that the same hath true Application to the *Faith-*
 “ *ful* in all Times and in all Places; because no Reason can be
 “ given, why the *Faithful* of one Time should so speak, but by
 “ the same it is enforced upon the *Faithful* of all Times.”

Thus, Dr. ABBOT hath shewed, “That the Prophet by Way
 of Prophecy indited this Prayer in the Name of the *Faithful*, who
 were

were to live in the Desolation of *Jerusalem*; that the Prayer of the Prophet *Daniel*, at that Time, fully expresseth the Effect of the same Prayer of *Isaiah*; and therefore that it is the Confession of the *Faithful* and *Godly*, that their *Righteousness* is as a *stained Cloth*. But further, he shews "that the *ancient Fathers* have used the Place for the Proof thereof;" hereby effectually removing the Prejudice against this Construction of the Text, as if it were only of *modern Date*, a *novel Conceit* of the *Reformers*. With this View, he recites that Speech of ORIGEN. "Who will glory concerning his *Righteousness*, seeing he heareth God saying by the Prophet, *All your Righteousness is (sicut Pannus Mulieris menstruatæ) as filthy Rags*." He observes also, HIEROM saith thus, "By thy Mercy we shall be saved, who by ourselves are *unclean*, and whatsoever *Righteousness* we seem to have, it is compar'd (Panno menstruatæ Mulieris) to *filthy Rags*. St. AUSTIN, alluding to the same Place, saith, 'Whatsoever he toucheth that is *unclean*, by the Law it shall be *unclean*. But we all, quasi Pannus menstruatæ, being come of an *unclean and corrupt Mass*, do carry in our Foreheads the *Blot of our Uncleaness*, which from God that seeth all Things, we cannot hide; thereby acknowledging that *Blot remaining in us*, which must needs stain whatsoever proceedeth from us.' But St. BERNARD is most frequent both in affirming this *Stain* of *all our Righteousness*, and in applying this Place to the Proof thereof. 'What can all our *Righteousness* be (saith he) in the Sight of God? Shall it not, as the Prophet saith, be reputed as a *defiled Cloth*; and shall not our *Justice*, if it be strictly judged, be found *unjust and scant*?' And in another Place, 'Our *base Righteousness* (if it be any) is *right* perhaps, but not *pure*; unless haply we think our selves better than our *Fathers*, who no less truly than humbly said, *All our Righteousnesses are as a defiled Cloth*.' And in another Place he saith likewise, 'All our very *Righteousnesses* being looked upon by the Light of Truth, are found as a *defiled Cloth*.' Again, 'Our perfect and secure Rejoycing is, when we are afraid of all our *Works*, as holy *Job* witnesseth of himself, and with the Prophet *Isaiah* do know that *all our Righteousnesses* are to be reputed no otherwise but as a *defiled Cloth*.'

This Reply of Dr. ABBOT is sufficient, I think, to vindicate the *Protestant* Interpretation of the Prophet's Words against the Charge of Novelty, as well as Perversion and Abuse.---*

* *Ad hujusmodi Dicta explicanda, Interprete benigno Opus est, non maligno Calumniatore.---* Episc. DAVENANT in Loc.

But

“ is as direct on *our* Side, as his Word can make him ; every where
 “ blazoning the Defects of *our own* Righteousness, -- every where
 “ extolling the perfect Obedience of *our Redeemer* --- Wo were to
 “ us, if not more just in *that*, than sanctify’d in *ourselves*. We are
 “ sanctify’d in *part*, according to the *Weakness of our Recit*, &c. --
 Agreeably Bp BARLOW || has these Remarks. ‘ Saint Paul himself
 ‘ desires, when he should appear at God’s Tribunal, to be *found in*
 ‘ CHRIST, *not having his own Righteousness: which is of the Law,*
 ‘ his inherent Righteousness of Works. -- The Quære is, what
 ‘ Law he means here ? --- I think it manifest, he means the *moral*
 ‘ Law. --- If we consider him *before* his Conversion, ’tis evident
 ‘ he then had no *Righteousness* of his own : and therefore to say,
 ‘ he means his Righteousness acquired by his natural Abilities
 ‘ before his Conversion [as *Papists* do] is evidently *irrational* ;
 ‘ seeing Saint Paul well knew (and has taught the World that
 ‘ Truth) that he neither had nor could have, *before* his Conversion,
 ‘ so much as one good Work, much less a *Righteousness* in Rela-
 ‘ tion to the moral Law. --- After his Conversion he had indeed
 ‘ a *Righteousness* of his own ; but this *imperfect*, and mix’d
 ‘ with sinful Failings, as he sadly complains, Rom. 7. 14, &c.
 ‘ This Righteousness of *Sanctification* is that inherent Righte-
 ‘ ousness which he calls *his own*. --- His Righteousness of *Works*
 ‘ is meant, which was *his own* Righteousness (1.) *Rationis Principii*, it was wro’t by him. (2.) *Rationis Subjecti*, it was in
 ‘ him. This the Apostle opposeth to an external imputed Righte-
 ‘ ousness : --- Declaring that he rely’d only on the *Righteousness*
 ‘ of God thro’ Faith in Christ ; which, to be sure, was not any
 ‘ Righteousness of his own Works. --- And Bp Barlow further
 observes, * concerning the Reformers in England, that in their
Homily of Salvation, they cite this Text, and have the following
 Note upon it, “ Saint Paul doth glory in the Contempt of *his*
 “ own Righteousness, and that he looked for the Righteousness of
 “ God by Faith. --- They also remark, “ As great and godly
 “ a Virtue as Faith is, yet it puts us *from itself*, and remits us
 “ to Christ, to have Forgiveness of Sins and Justification by him
 “ only.”

Others moreover have observ’d † by Way of Criticism on the
 Text ; that the Apostle’s Words in the Original are, My own

|| LETT. of Justif. p. 126, 156, --- 163. * Ibid. p. 116, 135.

† See Mr. ALDOP’s *Antisozzo* ; p. 547, &c. and Mr. ROW-
 LIN’s 7 Ser. on *Isa.* 45. 24. --- pag. 218.

Righteousness which is *in vobis* (without the prepositive Article, usually met with in other Places) and may truly be read, My own Righteousness which is *of Law*; not *of* [the] *Law*, as if it pointed particularly to the Law of *Moses*, which is sometimes call'd *the Law*, in Contradistinction to that *Grace and Truth which came by Jesus Christ*: but only *of Law*, indefinitely and in general; or 'from Law, from a Law, from any Law,' that God has given Men for a Rule, or establish'd Measure of right Action. *Righteousness* indeed is a practical Conformity to the Law or Rule one is under: and so the Apostle by *his own Righteousness* intends his Actions of Conformity to God's Law, the Rule of his Obedience, whatever it was. Now, it could not be the *Levitical Law*; for that was abolish'd by the Death of Christ, and the Apostle had long liv'd in the intire Neglect of that, nor ever expected to be recall'd to the Observance of that. It must therefore mean the *Gospel-Law*, in its moral Precepts and positive Institutions, the only standing reveal'd Rule, and the Law which he was now under a professed Subjection to. Consequently, when he here speaks of *his own Righteousness of Law*, he intends his personal *Gospel-Righteousness*, or his *Works of Righteousness* in Obedience to the Gospel-Rule, as well internal, as external. Surely he can't mean any bare *external* Righteousness of his own, as the *Papists* pretend. For as he now had an *inward* Principle of Righteousness, which he infinitely prefer'd to any meer outward Practice; so he well knew, that God's *Law* was a Rule to his *inward*, as well as outward Man; prescribing to the Heart and Conscience within, the Secrets of which God only is privy to, and not only to the visible Conversation and Action among Men. He knew therefore, that only an outward Appearance of *Righteousness* in the Sight of Men was not the *Righteousness of Law*, which properly is a Righteousness in the Sight of God. The Apostle must then, in the Renunciation which he now made of *his own Righteousness*, have Respect to a *Righteousness* which was in some Measure conformable to *Law*, internal and real, not merely external and apparent. Whatever *Righteousness* was now (subjectively) *his own*, whether inward or outward, he sacrifices all, that he might *win Christ*; he repudiates the whole from being the Matter of his *Justification*, and trusts in nothing that is *his own* to recommend him to the Divine Mercy.

And this Construction of the Text has sometimes been defended by alledging parallel Scriptures, where the Expression, *my* or *our Righteousness*, must necessarily signify a *real* Righteousness; not

consisting barely in External, but including a Degree of inward Conformity and sincere Obedience to the Law of God. Here *Protestants* have generally instanc'd in *Daniel's* Prayer (Chap. 9. 18.) and in *Isaiab's* Prayer (Chap. 64. 6.) in particular, as parallel Places ; where the Servants of God, in like Language of Renunciation with that of the Apostle *Paul*, use the Expression, *Our Righteousnesses*, and most evidently intend *real* Righteousnesses, and not the outward Superficies or Semblance only of Obedience, a meer Skeleton of Righteousness, without any Thing of inward Substance and Vitality. But it means some Degree of that which is elsewhere described *the Righteousness of God's Testimonies*, and is sometimes call'd *true Holiness* ; which ever implies inward, as well as outward, Conformity to the Divine Rule of Obedience.

THE *PAPIST* † indeed thinks personal *Holiness* to be intended by the *Righteousness of Faith* ; which he supposes to mean, not any extrinsic, relative, imputed Righteousness of *another*, but an intrinsic, qualitative, and moral Righteousness of *our own* ; call'd the *Righteousness of Faith*, because *Faith* is the vital Root or Principle, from whence our sincere Obedience springs : and this he imagines to be call'd *the Righteousness of God*, because God is the prime Efficient of It, because 'tis an Image of his Righteousness, and because he accepts it for our Justification. --- But *PROTESTANTS* answer to this, that the Manner of Expression used by the Apostle here, necessarily carry's it to a different Sense. He do's not say, *the Righteousness which is Faith*, or which is the Obedience of Faith ; but *that which is THROUGH Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God BY Faith*. Phrases never made Use of by this Apostle in his Writings, nor any where else in Scripture, to describe *our own* inherent *Righteousness* ; as if *Faith* itself, or the Fruits of Faith produced in us, were the very *Righteousness*, that is the Matter or objective Reason of our *Justification* before God : but always to point out the *Righteousness* of *CHRIST* (not his absolute, but his respective, dispensative Righteousness) as the Object which *Faith* eyes and receives, and centres its Expectations in, for obtaining Mercy. The Scriptures frequently mention the *Righteousness which is of God*, the *Righteousness which is thro' Faith*, but ever with a plain Reference to a Righteousness foreign or extrinsic to us ; the Righteousness of *another*, and not that which is in our selves ;

† *BELLARM.* *de Justif.* p. 90. 96. & p. 176, 177.

an *imputed*, and not an *inherent* Righteousness : which two *Righteousnesses* the Apostle puts in Contradistinction to one another here and often elsewhere. Whereas, the *Papist* Gloſs on the Text destroys one of his Ideas, and confounds *Justification* with *Sanctification*, which are two Things very different in their Nature, have a very distant Situation in the Scheme of Redemption, and between which accordingly the Apostle always preserves a wide Distinction, in his Discourses upon them.

It has been further remark'd by *Protestant* Writers, that there's a beautiful *Gradation* in the Apostle's Speech, of which our Text is a Part ; that it is evidently *progressive*, not in the *Tenses* only, but the *Contents* of it. None will deny, he advances from the *past* Time to the *present* : and *PROTESTANTS* hold, that *his own Righteousness of Law*, which he renounces in our Text, means that which he had *at the Time* of his writing this Epistle ; a *Christian* therefore, and not a *Jewish* Righteousness ; and in the Renunciation he here makes, they suppose him, as by the whole Tenor of his Language he manifestly respects a *future* Time, to have a tacit Reference to the Day of *Judgment*.

To this the *PAPIST* answers * ; “ That it is but *puerile*, or
“ weak and impertinent, to argue from the Apostle's varying
“ the *Tense* ; as if he must needs speak of divers *Things*, because
“ he speaks in divers *Tenses* ! When the Truth is, that Word
“ (*ARBITROR*, or *I account*) respects not his present Works,
“ but only his present Judgment concerning Works past, & done
“ by him while of the *Jews* Religion. 'Tis strange, how ready
“ these Hereticks [meaning the Reformers] are with their
“ *Blasphemies*, on the slightest or no Occasion.”

To which the *PROTESTANT* replies, that it's *puerile* Weakness indeed, to mistake the main Drift of an Argument, or to answer it with meer Quibble and Evasion, or with Calumny, as is done here. For the Force of our Argument do's not lie so much in the Apostle's changing the *Tense*, in our Text, when renouncing *his own Righteousness*, but in his changing the whole Form of Expression, and speaking here at the *present* Time in Relation to some *future* Time ; which evidently imports a Renunciation of his *present* Righteousness.--- For, not contenting himself with having before said (ver. 7.) *What Things were Gain to me, those I HAVE counted Loss for Christ*, he proceeds from the past to the present Time, and rising in his Views, he expresses more

* *Ibid.* p. 96, & 413.

than he had already, saying (ver. 8, & 9.) *Yea doubtless and I do count ALL Things (whether past, or present) but Loss,--- and do count them but Dung, THAT I MAY (hereafter) win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law; or, as I think (the like Phrase being so used elsewhere) it might be read, not having for my Righteousness that which is of Law.---* Now to suppose, as the PAPIST do's, that the Apostle is here only asserting his resolute Adherence to a former Judgment he had made, at his Conversion from Judaism to Christianity, and so but repeating in the *present* Tense that very same Declaration which he had already express'd sufficiently in the *past* Tense; This, says the PROTESTANT, is very much to lessen, if not destroy the Beauty and Energy of his Speech, to detract from the Propriety and Emphasis of his Terms of Amplification, to confound his manifestly different Ideas, to sink the Meaning and deaden the Spirit of the whole, and turn the Passage in our Text particularly into little better than an empty and trifling Tautology; when yet, in the *Protestant* View and Application of it, it appears very animated and striking, truly rich in Sense and new in its Contents.--- Besides, as the Apostle here, by the whole Aspect of his Language, undoubtedly had in his Eye the future eternal Judgment and final Result of Things, it carry's the Face of extream Absurdity, to suppose him, after so long a Course of *Works of Righteousness*, in Character of a Christian and in Quality of an Apostle of Christ, expressing now with so much Solemnity his Desire that he might not go out of the World a meer Jew, and renouncing only the Hope of his being found at last in his *Pharisaical* Righteousness! After so many Years of Gospel-Profession and Ministry, how unreasonable do's it look, to suppose, that when he is representing to his Christian Friends the present Ground of his Trust for Justification before God, what *Righteousness* it now is or is not bottom'd upon, he should in the renunciative Part of his Declaration recur to an antiquated Pretension, a meer imaginary *Jewish* Righteousness, which he had long ago relinquish'd; or at most, only speak of a meer *external* Righteousness under the *Gospel*? Truly, if it be not a Gospel-Righteousness, inherent and real, that he means here by *his Righteousness of Law*, it seems, he can have no rational consistent Meaning whatever. If this be not what he now calls *his own*, then we must suppose him here only to renounce that which is *no* Righteousness at all, but is at best only a lifeless Image, falsely wearing the Name. For, if he had now had nothing beyond a meer *external* Conformity to the *Christian* Institution, his Religion had been still

still as vain, as when a *Jewish Zealot* ; his *Righteousness* had scarce exceeded the *Righteousness* of *Saul* the Pharisee, and all his seeming *Righteousness* had indeed been but a plausible Cover of real *Unrighteousness*. Whereas, in Fact, he now was and for a great while had been a sincere Christian and a distinguish'd Minister of *JESUS* : yet nevertheless he even now declares, after a long Series of upright and eminent Profession and Practice, as well as when he first commenc'd a Believer, that he utterly distrusts every Thing of *his own*, in point of Worthiness therein, to procure him Favour with his righteous Judge ; that he still renounces all Pretension to any such inherent *Righteousness*, as might embolden him to present himself, with a Claim on that Score alone to be reputed just and *unblameable in Holiness*, before the Judgment-Seat of God, which now he has in Prospect. But going out of himself, and looking beyond his own *Righteousness*, he casts his Eye to *JESUS*, and asserts his Dependance on him to secure his final Happiness : declaring he desires to be found in *Him*, that God might view him in and thro' the blessed Mediator, *the Lord his Righteousness*, and not view him as he is *in himself*, at present an imperfect, impotent, *wretched Man* (as he elsewhere describes his Case) by reason of *Sin* dwelling in him, and to continue such till the Period of his disciplinary State ; nor consider him merely in Character of a moral Agent and accountable Creature, to be dealt with on the Foot of his own Obedience, and judg'd in Strictness according to *Law*, to be try'd according to the Exactness of the moral Precepts even of the Gospel-Revelation, and to have his own inherent *Righteousness*, *that which is of Law* (and not *that which is of God* by Imputation) regarded as the Rule and Reason of the Judgment to be pass'd upon him. No, he wou'd not for a World, for a thousand Worlds, have the just and almighty Judge descend from Heaven, in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that *obey not the Gospel*, and find him with no better *Righteousness* upon him, than *his own* sublimest moral *Righteousness*, to recommend him to Mercy in that tremendous Day. For, as he was now conscious of his being *not already perfect*, nor indeed expected ever to attain it while in this mortal State, so he well knew that an *imperfect* *Righteousness*, such as his own, cou'd never abide the Test of severe *Law*, cou'd never bear a critical Scrutiny by the exact Rule of Morality laid down in the Gospel ; and therefore that he cou'd not *stand in the Judgment*, if try'd according to the Strictness of his moral Obligations, as a Man, or a Christian. Now, says the *Protestant*, if this was the Case with the great Saint *Paul* himself, what Presumption and Folly must it be in any of
inferiour

inferiour moral Attainments, to look for Justification before God in Virtue of their own Righteousness ?

Let vain-glorious PAPISTS delude and flatter themselves with the pleasing Idea of a present *Perfection* in their own Righteousness, “ an *absolute* Justice in themselves (as they speak) free from all “ Infection of Sin, clear of all polluting Defects,” constituting them sufficiently *righteous* before God, in the judiciary Sense, making them amiable and acceptable in his Sight, and leaving no Occasion for a superadded *imputed* Righteousness.!-- This imaginary Perfection and Sufficiency of inherent Righteousness the REFORMERS and their Followers have ever exploded, “ as an “ idle Dream, a *Pelagian* Whimsy, a drunken Fancy (as Bp “ ABBOT speaks †) contrary to Experience, contrary to Conscience, contrary to our own Confessions to God, and contrary “ to the Word of God.--- There’s none but *imperfect Perfection* “ here” (says he ; meaning an Universality of Graces, but all delinquent in their Degree of Vigour and Activity, and Manner of Expression) “ None but what leaves us in Case to be call’d “ *evil* : of common and original Uncleanliness there’s That yet “ sticking, for which Christ may say to us, as he did to his “ Apostles, YE being EVIL. To affirm Man now to be in himself just and clean in the Sight of God, is to justify CHRIST out of his Place, who is the Lord our Righteousness. It is to defeat the Work of GOD, by whom he is made unto us Righteousness.--- Not but that we also by him do work Righteousness, according to the Grace given us ; but this Righteousness is, thro’ our Corruption and Frailty, too weak and base, to stand before God, for us to be saved thereby.--- But Faith is our Comfort ;--- that as Jacob receiv’d the Blessing and Inheritance in the Apparel of Esau, his elder Brother, to whom the same did properly belong, so we receive the Blessing of God, and are accepted unto eternal Life, in the Garment of the Righteousness of CHRIST, by Faith in him.--- It’s our Safety, that this overshadoweth the Errour of our Works, that this covereth our Imperfections, which disgrace and blemish all our Righteousness. What have we to cover and hide the same, but the Fleece of the Merit of Jesus Christ ?”

Well therefore might the Apostle (and Protestants after his Example) so ardently breathe after CHRIST, and express his

† Answer. to Dr. BISHOP’s Epis. p. 138, 139. and Def. Resp. Cath. p. 418, 583, 585, 622.

earnest Expectation and Desire to be *found in Him*, united to him, interested in him, possess'd of him, covered with him, hid in his Wounds, invested with the "Purple Garment of Redemption" "his Blood," and enwrapped in that long, large and rich Cloke of the Redeemer's *Righteousness*, thro' Faith in him.--- In Consequence, well might the Apostle (and we after him) comparatively despise all his own best Attire of *inherent* Righteousness, in Respect of that superlatively excellent Robe of *imputed* Righteousness, and with Relation to that great Concern of his *obtaining Mercy* in the great Day. Well might he desire to be found, at that Day, *not having for his Righteousness that which is of Law* ; this being in strict Law-Consideration but imperfect, and on a Trial by Law utterly insufficient to justify him. Though truly valuable in the Apostle's (and so in the Protestant's) Judgment, for it's Divine Original, for its excellent Nature, and for its Usefulness to its proper Ends, and altho' highly esteem'd as a Part of the Salvation which is by Christ, as one of the precious Benefits of his Purchase, and an essential Requisite to future Happiness in the actual Possession and full Enjoyment of him ; yet this personal Righteousness being at present but *imperfectly* attain'd by the inspir'd Apostle himself, he dares not confide in it for a safe Appearing before the dread Tribunal of infinite Justice, but desires and hopes to be found under a more sure and effectual Covert. Not that he wish'd to be *unclothed*, in point of Sanctification; but only to be found *clothed upon*, with a superiour and more effectual Righteousness than his own, in Point of Justification.

He well knew both *sanctifying* Righteousness and *justifying* Righteousness to be in their several Places, and for their several Purposes, of infinite Importance ; the former to give him a *Meanness*, and the latter, to give him a *Title* to be a Partaker of the heavenly Inheritance. While therefore he follows after *Holiness*, as of fundamental moral Obligation, and in the Nature of Things a requisite Preparative for possessing and enjoying the Inheritance; yet nevertheless, as knowing his present Attainments to be very defective, and consequently in the Reason of Things impossible to be his *justifying* Righteousness before God, he founds no Claim of Right upon it, in Virtue of it's own Worth, but in this View renounces it altogether. He desires, he mayn't be found having for his *Righteousness* that which is of *Law*, his own moral Righteousness only, to guard and recommend him at the awful Day he has in Prospect ; but that he might be found having on him a more sufficient and compleat Armour of Righteousness, even that which is by *Faith*, the only effectual Cover to his Sins,

Sins, and the only sure Defensative from the *Wrath to come*. To this final Issue of Things, the Apostle is generally tho't to have pointed his Eye, in the Words before us. And under such a Prospect, he has been tho't by Protestants to speak so distrustfully and disparagingly of his own imperfect *Righteousness*; applying to it even the depreciating Name of *Dung*, as being unworthy the Character of a *justifying* Righteousness, and of no Sufficiency in it self to intitle him to the special Mercy of God.

Tho' indeed his thus under-valuing it has also been sometimes accounted for in another Way; by supposing, he might reasonably disparage it as view'd in a *comparative* Light. He might deservedly reproach his own Righteousness, as being but *Dung* and *Filth*, in Comparison of the supreme and infinite Righteousness of God: since we read, *There is none holy as the Lord*; yea it is written, *There is none good, but one, that is God*. Behold, the *Heavens* are not clean in his Sight: the brightest *Star* above is eclips'd by his superiour Glory, and appears but as a Lump of *Dung* and Impurity.---So he might justly call it by this disgracing Name, in Compare with the immaculate and indefective Obedience of the Man *JESUS*, that holy and just One.---In a Word, (to omit other Comparisons) he might, by Reason of the Pollutions cleaving to his purest Gospel-Righteousness, while in this World of Imperfection, represent it under so derogatory an Emblem, in Respect of the *Glory* to be reveal'd in him, and in Compare with the supereminent Holiness and sinless Perfection of Saints in the *Resurrection-State*. Hence that Observation of *AUSTIN*, a celebrated Father ¶ (*In Comparatione Resurrectionis illius, Stercus est tota ista Vita quam gerimus, &c.*) “ That all the Life which
“ we live here, *i. e.* all the *Righteousness* of this Life, is but
“ *Dung* in Comparison of the *Resurrection*; that if a Man measure himself, what he is now and what he shall be then, he will
“ find This which now is, to be but *Loss* and *Dung* in Comparison of That.” I suppose, as *Austin* here plainly alludes to our Text, he might naturally enough be led into this Illustration upon it by some remarkable Passages in the following Context; where the Apostle throws a comparative Slight on all his past and present moral Attainments, and declares, that *forgetting* every Thing *behind*, he only looks *forward*, pressing towards the Mark and breathing after the Perfection and Glory he hop'd for at the *Resurrection* of the Just.--- Now, taking the Text in any such

¶ Cited by Bp *ABBOT*, ubi supra, p. 584, 585.

comparative

comparative Light, where is the *Impudence* of Protestants, where the *Blasphemy*, or where the *Absurdity* they are tax'd with by their Adversaries, for understanding and applying the Apostle's Words as spoken of his real Christian Righteousness !

But still the POPISH Writers, I find, renew the Charge upon us, prosecute it in sundry Particulars, and urge it with some new Enforcements : which it may be worth while to take a distinct Consideration of, tho' as briefly as I well can.--Let it be observ'd,

(1.) The foremention'd Popish Priest Dr. BISHOP's most plausible Plea is, † “ That inherent *Righteousness*, being God's “ *Gift*, is of it self *pure*, and has sufficient Virtue in it self to the “ *End* for which it is given, the making a Man *righteous*. ” --- However, to this the PROTESTANT makes Reply ; that this *End*, taken in its *moral* View, is but *imperfectly* attain'd at present, by the largest Partaker of the Gift of sanctifying Grace : and for that Reason, it is impossible, *inherent* Righteousness should reach this *End*, taken in it's *forensic* or *relative* Notion ; but in this View 'tis secured to us only by an *imputed* Righteousness, even that which is of God thro' Faith. It is *this*, that the Apostle intends in the Place alluded to, where he mentions the *Gift of Righteousness* ; and he describes it, the *Gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ*. (Rom. 5.) He calls it the *Righteousness of ONE, the Obedience of ONE* : and informs us, that it's by *this* we obtain *Justification of Life*, by *this* we are *made righteous*, i. e. in the forensic or relative Sense. In this Law-Sense our own Obedience can never constitute us *righteous* before God ; because it is in it self at best but an imperfect Conformity to the Rule of *Righteousness*, and is attended with a depraving Mixture of *Unrighteousness* and positive Transgressions of the Law. Bp ABBOT observes, concerning inherent Righteousness, † “ Though it be *pure*, of it self, “ and in the Work of God, yet it is *soiled* in the Puddles of our “ Corruption, and receiveth a Blemish by our crooked and untoward *using* of it ; and is neither *given* to that End, nor is *sufficient*, to yield us *Justification* in the Sight of GOD. ’ --- And to mention some correspondent Observations of another excellent Divine, ‖ “ By Reason of the *Law of Sin*, which is always moving & defiling, *Evil* is mixed with all the *Good* we do, inasmuch “ that there would be a *Wo* and a *Curse* to all our gracious Acts,

† Cited by Bp ABBOT, *Def. Ref. Cath.* p. 400. † *Ubi supra*, p. 403, 404. ‖ Mr. A. BURGESS, on *Original Sin*, p. 11, 495-499, and on *Justification*, Part 2d, p. 233, 234, and p. 172.

• if strictly examin'd.--- There's Drofs and Sin in every holy
 • Duty, infomuch that the Apostle cries out of himself, *O wretched Man that I am!*--- The *Flesh* soils and debases our holiest
 • Duties : 'tis as Mud cast into a pure Stream, or Poison mingled
 • with Wine.--- Every Duty of ours needs the Mercy of
 • God to forgive it's Imperfections. ---- God is not only angry
 • with gross Sins, but displeas'd at the *imperfect* [Exercise of the]
 • Graces of his People. (Rev. 3. 2.)--- For this they are subject
 • to divers *Chastisements*.. And hence they *groan* under their
 • Imperfections.-- Hereby the godly Man is made to go out of all
 • his Graces and his Duties [in Point of Dependance upon 'em for
 • Justification] and calls his very *Righteousness* a *menstruous Rag*.---
 • So the Prophet *Isaiah* of old complain'd (Chap. 64. 6.) *All*
 • *our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*. Not only their *Unrighteousnesses*,
 • but their very *Righteousnesses* were as *filthy Rags*.---
 • Because of the Pollution cleaving to our best Duties it is, that
 • *Paul* judgeth them *Dung* and *Drofs*, comparatively to Christ's
 • Righteousness, and in Reference to Justification. *Phil.* 3. 8.--
 This may suffice for Answer to the first Objection.

Cardinal BELLARMINE advances some others more directly level'd against the *Protestant* Opinion upon our Text ; and repeatedly charging it with *Blasphemy*, as well as Absurdity and *incredible Pride*, he urges the Accusation with Vehemence and expostulates the Case, in a Variety of plausible, but weak Pleadings and abusive Insinuations ; which I shall now consider. The Objection he begins with is indeed something coincident with that already reply'd to : yet being set in a little different Light, I shall not pass it, but allow it a distinct Consideration.

Let it then be observ'd,

(2.) 'Tis objected, that this very Apostle, who is suppos'd in our Text to renounce his evangelical Works of Righteousness, do's elsewhere dignify and applaud such Works, by intitling them the *Fruit of the SPIRIT* : and therefore he can't rationally be suppos'd to stigmatise the very same Works with the dishonourable Name of *Dung* ; but it must be *blasphemous*, to make such a Supposition. The CARDINAL's own Words are, "*Quanta, q.æso, Blasphemia, &c. i. e.* How great, I beseech you, is the "*Blasphemy*, to call by the Name of *DUNG*, those very Works, "*springing from Faith and the Grace of God, which this same* "*Apostle himself (Gal. 5.) calls the Fruits of the SPIRIT ! Are* "*then the Fruits of the Spirit indeed DUNG !*" (*de Justif.* p. 96.)

To this the *Protestant* makes Answer ; 'Tis a vain and impotent Insult, that has no Foundation to support it, but meer Mistake

take or wilful Misrepresentation of our Opinion. For as a worthy Writer, of the Church of Scotland †, has noted, what we hold is only to this Purpose: 'Tho' our personal Righteousness be good, yet in the Matter of *Justification* before God we must lay it aside, and betake our selves solely to the Righteousness of CHRIST, and seek to be found in him alone. To account our own Righteousness, consisting in our Obedience to the Law, to be DUNG, as Paul did, in the Business of *Justification*, is all that we plead for.' And as a judicious Divine of our own observes ‡; 'Every true Believer doth sincerely desire to be found in a Righteousness which is according to the Law of God, and to be full of good Works; he would be sanctified throughout, perfectly conform'd to God's Holy Will, he makes it his Study every Day to live to God, and desires to be found so doing when he shall be summon'd to appear before his Judge: But he hath no Mind to be found in it as his Trust, his Reliance, that which he would be tried by, and stand or fall according as it shall be found. Christ doth by his Spirit infuse an Holiness and Righteousness into his People, yet this is not the Thing we are justify'd by or for: for that which is imperfect, tho' it may be acceptable in a Way of Grace and Pity, yet it cannot justify in a Way of Law and Equity. The Sentence therefore of *Justification* must needs proceed from a Righteousness which we never perform'd.-- The Apostle in our Text and Context is treating of *Justification*; and in Respect of that, he resolutely despises every Thing of his own.'-- From that (says a valuable Lay-Writer †) he removes all Things; but CHRIST and his Righteousness, not admitting his own Graces to be the Matter of it. Even our inherent Graces (how precious soever in *Sanctification*) must not assume the royal Seat of CHRIST and his Righteousness: They must not be our very Righteousness in *Justification*. BELLARMINE indeed here crieth out, *Quanta, quæso, Blasphemia est!* How great is this *Blasphemy*, to call good Works, done from the Faith and Grace of Christ, no better than Dung! But PARÆUS answers him very well, that they are not so call'd absolutely in themselves, but comparatively to the Righteousness of CHRIST: *Nefas enim ducit in ullis Operibus Fiduciam Justificationis ponere coram Deo.* In the Matter of *Justification* the whole Church

† BROWN, *Life of Justif.* p 460, 461. † WILLARD, *Brief Disc. of Justif.* p. 15, 66. 68. † E. POLHILL, Esq; Answ. to Dr. Sherlock. p. 360,--363.

‘ calls her *Righteousness* a *filthy Rag* : St. Paul will not *there* know his own inherent Graces, no more than Job would *know his own Soul*.’- (Job 9. 21 ,)-- Further, says Dr. BARLOW, a Bishop of the Church of England † “When it is objected, that St. Paul would not (nor truly cou’d) call his own inherent *Righteousness*, or evangelical Obedience, *Loss* and *Dung* ; the Answer is easy and evident. For, 1. That *his own Righteousness* (of which he speaks) consider’d *absolutely*, and in it self, neither truly could nor was (by him) so called. But, 2. As the Greek Scholiasts observe (and ’tis evident by the Text) he counts those Things he speaks of, *Loss* & *Dung*, κατὰ σύγκρισιν and *comparatively* ; in Relation and Comparifon to our blessed Saviour and his Righteousness. His Meaning is not, that he desired to *want* or *lose* his inherent Righteousness ; but only not to have it, to that End and Purpose, to *trust* in it, and rely upon it, for his *Justification* before God.”

Thus, it appears, that it’s only in some such *limited* Sense, the Protestants suppose the ignominious Name of *Dung* apply’d by the Apostle to his own Gospel-Righteousness : and not *simply*, or in an absolute and indefinite Manner, as our *Papish* Adversaries abusively represent our Construction of the Text, in order to fasten upon us the Imputation of *Blasphemy*. But surely it can’t be blaspheming the HOLY SPIRIT, to follow his own Dictates in the inspir’d Scriptures, which every where teach us the Imperfection of the Saint’s Graces and Works, exclude them from being the Matter of our *justifying Righteousness*, and proclaim it the sole Prerogative of CHRIST’S Righteousness, by Grace imputed and by Faith receiv’d, to effect *Justification of Life*. What *Blasphemy* can it be, to say, that the Graces of the SPIRIT are ineffectual to an *End*, which he himself declares them never design’d for ? Or, Where is the *Blasphemy* of saying, that the Wisdom of God having seen fit, the *Sanctification of the Spirit* should be incomplete in the present Life, therefore “ No meer Man since the Fall is “ able in this Life perfectly to keep the Commandments of God, “ but daily doth break them in Tho’t, Word, and Deed ?” That our very Exercises of Grace are tinctured by the remaining Corruption of our Nature, and all our Works carry the debasing Mark of human Frailty and Imperfection ? “ For (as Bp ABBOT well observes ‡) altho’ in their *Original*, which is the SPIRIT of God, they be *pure* and *clean*, yet as Water, tho’ clear in the

† LETT. of *justif.* p 164, 167. ‡ DEF. *Ref. Cath.* p. 706.
Fountain,

Fountain, gathereth Uncleanneſs from the *Channel* wherein it runneth, ſo the *Works of Grace* wrought in us” [not the immediate Inſuſions of the *Spirit*, or the ſeminal *Principles* of Grace themſelves, conſider’d *abſtractly*, but only taken together with their recipient *Subject*, and conſider’d as exiſting and operating within us] “do receive ſome Taint of the Corruption of our Nature, thro’ which they paſs.”

Our Graces and Virtues are indeed the *FRUIT of the Spirit* : but then it is to be obſerv’d, neither are they the very *SPIRIT himſelf* ; nor is *his Influence*, in the Production and Actuation of them, at all derogated from, by applying this Name of Reproach in our Text to the inherent *Righteousneſs* of *Saints*. † For, tho’ he is the *prime Efficient*, by implanting, preſerving, exciting and aſſiſting the Principles of Grace and Virtue in us ; yet he is not the *immediate formal Agent*, in the Exertment and Exerciſe of them. Tho’ we are call’d the Temple of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and ‘tis he *giveth us* to believe, to repent, and obey ; nevertheless there being no ſuch Unity of *Persons* between Him and us, as that *He* ſhould be ſaid to *perform* theſe very Actions himſelf, it muſt therefore be only *We* that do them, under his ſpecial Influence. And however pure, however perfect the *Principles* of Operation, as inſus’d by the Divine Sanctifier, yet as they actually exiſt and exert themſelves in the human *Subject*, they are but imperfect in their Degree of Vigour, and defective in their Manner of acting, thro’ the Reſiſtance of the *Fleſh* ; and this “breathes ſome diſtaſteful Quality upon our very beſt and pureſt Works, for which we have Need to aſk Pardon at God’s Hands.” ‘Tis a known and approv’d Maxim in the Schools, *Quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad Modum Recipientis*. So the Grace of the *Spirit* receiv’d by us, is only (as *Bp HALL* has expreſs’d it) according to the *Model of our weak Receipt* ; and our Exertments of Grace are but according to the inferior Manner of human Action, in this imperfect State of our lapſed Nature : ſo that “all our Works favour of our earthly Veſſels.” But we look for Perfection in the coming World. — Theſe Conſiderations, I think, ſufficiently vindicate the *Proteſtant* Senſe and Improvement of our Text, from the Imputation of *Blasphemy*.

I ſhall but add here : as unwilling as I am to make Uſe of *Reſtorſion* in an Argument of this Nature, yet I can’t forbear mentioning how free ſome of the old *Reformers* were to return this

† See Mr. BURGESS of *Juſtiſ*. Part II. p. 172.

odious Crimination, in their Controversies with the PAPISTS : whose Doctrine of *Justification by inherent Grace*, they charge with *Blasphemy*, as it strikes at the sacred Prerogative of CHRIST to be *our Righteousness*, and thrusts him out of one of the most eminent Characters of Honour he sustains, in the Gospel-Plan of Redemption. Thus, Dr. WILLET, that ancient and famous Defender of the Reformation, didn't scruple to drop such Reflections as these. †

“ *Bellarmino* (says he) denieth, that we are justified formally by the Righteousness of CHRIST, but asserts it to be by *our own* Righteousness inherent in us. This is a great *Blasphemy*, and contrary to the Apostle, *Phil. 3. 9.*”--- And again, “ To say, that a Man by *working well*, even of the Grace and Gift of God, is *justified*, is to make the Death of CHRIST needless and in vain. What greater *Blasphemy*, than this !”

(3.) The PAPIST † still prosecuting his Argument, objects ;

“ How do's the blessed Apostle glory, saying (2 Tim. 4.) *I have fought the good Fight, I have finished the Course, I have kept the Faith : Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown, &c.* But ought so great an Apostle to glory thus of that which is DUNG !”

True, replies the PROTESTANT, he reflects with a sacred Pleasure on these Things in his past Experience and Practice : but we must expound what he says here, in a just Confidence with what he has said elsewhere ; particularly in *Gal. 2. 20, 21.*

“ I am crucified with Christ : Nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the Grace of God : for if Righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.” From this we learn, that as *Faith* in CHRIST was his governing Principle, so the *Hope of Righteousness*, now in his View, was from CHRIST, and not from the Law. Had he *fought the good Fight* ? It must be remember'd, it was the *good Fight of FAITH*. Had he *finish'd the Course* ? It must also be remember'd, he ran the Race set before him, *looking unto Jesus*, the Author and Finisher of his FAITH. Had he *kept the Faith* ? This may intend the internal Principle, as well as the external Doctrine, so denominated. Had he a *Crown* in View ? He expected it as the *End of his FAITH*, whereby he had believed *unto Righteousness*, and so to *everlasting Life*.--- The Apostle was now in the high Exercise of that *Faith*, by which the *just do live*, both

† *Synop. Pap.* p. 580, and 1273. † *BELL. de Just.* p. 96.
both

in a relative and qualitative Respect, and which God has appointed the special Medium in the Hand of the Spirit for the Application of Redemption, that no Flesh should glory in his Presence. As it is written, *That God might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*. Where is *Boasting* then? It is *excluded*. By what Law? That of *Works*? Nay, but by the Law of *Faith*. The Christian therefore is to know none but the Triumphs of *Faith*: and these are but *bumble* and *self-abasing* Triumphs, Triumphs in CHRIST, and not in our selves. *Faith* is in its Nature a *self-denying* Grace, powerfully counter-acting a *self-righteous* Spirit in every Form of its Appearance, suppressing every *self-applauding* Thought, and disposing us to have our Eyes ever towards the Lord, beholding the *Lamb of God*. looking for the *Mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ* unto eternal Life:--- This very Apostle, tho' so vastly excelling in Gifts, Graces, and holy Services, yet was sensible *he had not whereof to glory before God*, any more than *Abraham*: and under the Influence of *Faith*, he did but *glory in the Lord*; not in himself, not in his intellectual Endowments, not in his moral Attainments. *God forbid* (says he) *that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*? Christ and his Obedience unto the Death was the Object of his Dependance and the Matter of his Glorifying. In respect of this, he undervalu'd and renounc'd every Thing of his own. Such was his Humility, he named himself *Less than the LEAST of all Saints*. Could he reduce himself lower! Nay, he expressly denominates himself *NOTHING*! But how is this? It can't be understood, he is so *simply* and *absolutely*; but *comparatively* and in some *relative* Sense. It must mean, he is *NOTHING* in point of *righteous Self*, *NOTHING* in point of Rivalship with Christ, *NOTHING* in Comparison of Christ, *NOTHING* in himself abstractedly from Christ, who is his *Righteousness* and *Strength* and *Life* and *All*.--- Now might he not as consistently account his own *Righteousness*, that which is of Law, to be *Dung*, as account himself to be *Nothing*? For was he not in Fact *Something*, in the Sense of the Word as he uses it sometimes? Was he not indeed a Man in Christ, an Apostle of Christ, an eminent Image of the Son of God, fill'd with the Spirit, enrich'd with Divine Knowledge, and abounding in every good Work? How then could he pronounce himself *NOTHING*? Why, just in the same Sense, with the same View, and from the same Spirit and Principle, as he calls his own *Righteousness* by the Name of *Dung*. Both Expressions conspire to illustrate & verify his chosen Motto, *By GRACE through FAITH*.

But

But now,

(4.) The PAPIST (alluding still to 2 *Tim.* 4. 12.) further ex-
postulates, “What *Crown of Righteousness* is owing to that which
“is DUNG ! Or who is that *righteous Judge*, which condescends
“to *Crown* that which is DUNG !”

Upon this the PROTESTANT observes, that eternal Life is
call’d a *Crown*, perhaps chiefly in Allusion to the ancient Custom
of crowning Victors with Garlands at the End of a Race, or En-
counter : and ’tis call’d a *Crown of Righteousness*, not primarily
in Respect of *our own Righteousness of Law*, but of *that which is*
of God by Faith. † In a Sense indeed Men’s personal Righteous-
ness is crown’d ; but herein God only crowns his own Gift : and
in Opposition to all Desert on Man’s Part, ’tis absolutely a *Crown*
of sovereign *Grace and Mercy* ; not of *Righteousness*, as due to
the Creature for his Service, which is always defective, and at
best is but his Duty, in Vertue whereof therefore he can chal-
lenge no Reward at the Hands of his *righteous Judge*. Neverthe-
less God crowns the Believer, in Consideration of CHRIST’s *Right-*
eousness upon him, and with a View to the gracious Promise,
founded on that Righteousness and embraced by Faith. God is
a *Debtor* to no Man, but the Man JESUS (God incarnate) and
to Nothing but his own free Promise made for *his Sake*. In Res-
pect of Him and the Promise in Him, God is *just and faithful*,
while yet he *freely by his Grace* pardons, justifies and saves the Man
to whom he *imputeth Righteousness without Works*. He preserves
unspotted the Character of a *righteous Judge*, while in his Loving-
kindness and Mercy he stoops to *crown* such as have no Demand
upon him on the Score of their personal Worthiness, or in Ver-
tue of their own *Works of Righteousness*, as justifying them in
his Sight. But while they renounce their own Righteousness as
Dung, in Point of Justification or a Title to saving Mercy, he
makes them accepted in the Beloved ; and in Justice to his Me-
rits on their Behalf, he vouchsafes to them the *Crown of Life*.---
I must here again remind you, that when the Apostle represents
his own Righteousness as *Dung*, he do’s not call it such *absolutely*
and *simply*, but only *comparatively* to Christ’s Righteousness, and
respectively to the Case of *Justification* before God, which is the
Source of all Right and Title to eternal Salvation. He do’s but
give it this Name in some such View as he styles himself *Nothing* :
And it might as reasonably be objected, Who is that righteous
or that wise Judge, which deigns to crown that which is NO-
THING !--- Truly ’tis Christ-exalting *Grace* which bestows, and

† Vid. ABBOT’s *Def. Ref. Cath.* p. 716.

Self-annihilating Faith which receives the *Crown of Righteousness*.-- However the Saint's *inherent* Righteousness may be the Evidence of his Right, and the Measure of his Reward ; yet the Reason of the Reward and the Foundation of the Right is CHRIST'S Righteousness, divinely *imputed* and by *Faith* received. God is *the righteous Judge*, and he will assert his Character, will display the Glory of his Name, both in real Justification here, and in declarative Justification hereafter ; both in pardoning now, and crowning in the End, such as only deserve Punishment at the Hand of his Justice. In doing both, he still *magnifies his Law*, preserves it's Authority and Dignity, secures it's Design, and lets not an iota of it fall to the Ground. But how can this be, unless he acts with a View to an absolute *Law-fulfilling* Righteousness ? Hence Dr. WILLET observes, || " God crowneth " the Works of his Saints, not for the Worthiness of *them*, which " indeed are but *Dung*, in Respect of the excellent Reward : " but we, with our Works, are crowned for the Worthiness of " CHRIST. *Rom. 6. 23.*"-- " Can that which in Comparison " is but *Dross* and *Dung* (says Bp ABBOT †) be truly said to " deserve the Righteousness of Heaven ?"-- But says Bp HALL †, " If our heavenly *Father* smell upon our Backs the Savour of " our elder *Brother's* Robes, we cannot depart from him un- " blessed."-- The humble Protestant agreeably expects the heavenly Crown as a *Crown of Righteousness*, with Respect to *the Righteousness which is of God by Faith* ; but as a meer Gift of sovereign *Mercy*, in Relation to his own Deserts. Hence that humble Speech of the last mention'd Divine, † " We are not " so Proud, that we should scorn (with the *Papist*) to expect " Heaven as a poor Man doth an *Alms* : Rather, according to " St. *Austin's* Charge, *Non sit Caput turgidum*, &c. (Let not the " *Head* be swell'd with Pride, that it may receive a *Crown*) we " do with all Humility and Self-dejection look up to the boun- " tiful Hand of that God, who crowneth in *Mercy*."

(5.) The *PAPIST* yet further objects, " And then what " *Thanks* do we owe to GOD, for creating us in Christ Jesus " unto good Works, if these are *nothing else but DUNG* ?"

To which the *PROTESTANT* replies : Truly infinite *Thanks* are due to the blessed God for his renewing Grace, from such as are the happy Subjects of it : and yet, in perfect Consistency with

|| *Synops.* p. 986. † *Def. R.C.* p. 585. † *His Works*, p. 807.

† *His Old Religion*, p. 50.

this, such ought to and will preserve a *humble* Opinion both of themselves and their Works.-- However, we demand; *Who* are they that ever said, the *good Works* of the Regenerate are “*Nothing else but DUNG ?*” Did ever any *Protestant* drop such an Expression, at least without some proper Guard or Limitation, to point out an honest and consistent Meaning ? Or is this any just Consequence of the *Protestant* Opinion; we are debating upon ! No, the Insinuation is abusive, and a wicked Calumny. For we do not say, we do not think, nor does our Opinion at all infer, that good Works are to be so call’d *absolutely*, in universal and indefinite Terms ; but only in a *comparative* Sense, and in Respect of a particular *End* and *Use* of them. We confess them good and profitable to Men, and gratefully acknowledge the Grace of God in Christ towards us in forming and furnishing us to good Works : But still we suppose ’em not design’d of God, nor suited in their own Nature, to answer *every* valuable Purpose; and view’d in some certain Positions, we suppose them to have *no Glory*, by Reason of the Glory that excelleth. Being in themselves imperfect, and intermingled with Sin, we maintain that they are as *Dung*, in Comparison with CHRIST’S Righteousness, and in Relation to the noble End *This* is design’d and adapted for, the recovery of the divine Favour to a perishing Sinner, setting him right in the Court of Heaven, and securing him against all the Challenges of God’s Law and Justice, to which any the least Sin must otherwise inevitably expose him.-- We maintain the Necessity and Advantage both of *imputed* and *inherent* Righteousness ; and think them both of such Consequence and Use to us, in their respective Places, as highly to deserve our Esteem, and our Thanksgivings to God : the latter as constituting our *Meetness*, the former as founding our *Right*, to inherit the Kingdom of God. But now shall it be said, we despise the one or other of these, the *Meetness* or the *Right* to inherit, because we don’t jumble and blend them together in our Doctrine, without Distinction ? Shall it be said, we despise *Sanctification*, because we don’t confound it with *Justification* ? Or with what Truth can it be said, that we account *inherent* Righteousness good for Nothing at all, and of no Importance to us in the least, merely because we don’t own it good for every Purpose, and in particular deny it’s Fitness to the End of our *Justification* ? With what Face of Truth or Honesty, can it be pretended, that we absolutely despise moral Virtue as meer *Dung*, because we say that we are *justified* by Faith, and not by Works ? Do’s this annul the Necessity, or destroy all Use and Benefit of real Virtue ? The Eye is not the Hand, nor is fitted

to do the Office of the Hand, and therefore cannot say to it, I have no Need of thee : The Head is not the Foot, nor is fitted to it's Design, and so cannot say to the Foot, I have no Need of thee : but yet are they not all of the Body and all of Use ? Shall it be said that we affirm, The Ear is not of the Body, or is of no Service, because we say, It is not the Eye, and cannot see ? Or that we hold, the smelling Faculty is of no Benefit, because we say, It is not the Hearing ? Or, if we distinguish between these Things, so different in their Nature and End, and refer each to its proper Place and Use, shall it be said that we despise or are unthankful for the one or the other ? No, we notwithstanding value both, and are *thankful* for both, in each of the Comparisons. So in the present Case, tho' we distinguish between Faith and Works, between Justification and Sanctification, and between Righteousness imputed and inherent ; yet we preserve a Value for both, and are thankful for both, in Respect of their several Ends and Uses. And hence, altho' we rate our own defective Obedience as *Dung*, in Comparison with the vicarious and meritorious Obedience of CHRIST, and as consider'd under the Notion of a *justifying* Righteousness, which is the whole of our Meaning, and we suppose was the *Apostle's* real Meaning ; yet this is not in the least inconsistent with our being truly *thankful* to God for his Mercy in renewing and purifying our Hearts by Faith, whereby we are dispos'd and capacitated to *work Righteousness*. No, there's a palpable Agreement between *Humility* and *Gratitude* in this Case ; the former by no Means excludes the latter ; both these gracious Tempers of Mind subsist and act with the greatest Harmony and mutual Subserviency, in the same Subject : and both are the Property and Characteristick of the regenerate Soul. Where the one or other is wanting, 'tis a dark Symptom. In particular without *Thankfulness* for the Provision of a better *Righteousness* than our own, for our *Justification*, or without that *Humility* towards God, which excludes Self-Confidence and Boasting in our own *Righteousness*, there's but little Sign of our being the *Workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*.--- I call to Mind those apposite Sayings of a late excellent Divine of our own † ; “ There's no regenerate Man, that makes to himself a *Righteousness* by any Doings of his own : Regeneration cures him of this Folly, and makes a Man afraid and ashamed of such foolish Attempts.--Man(says he) if thou dost not count

† Dr. C. MATHER, *Evangel. Gosp.* p. 30, 34.

“ *Loss and Dung* to be a Name good enough for the best Thing
 “ that ever thou didst, thou art *in thy own Righteousness* to this
 “ Day.”

But the PAPIST adds one Reflection more ;

(6) “ In fine, if the good Works of the Faithful are *Loss*
 “ and *Dung*, then certainly they ought not to be *praised* and ad-
 “ *hered* to, but *shook off* and *thrown away*.”

No, says the PROTESTANT, not by any Means. This is no just Consequence from our Doctrine : there’s no Appearance of Reason for such an Inference. What we plead for, is their being excluded from all Concernment in *Justification of Life* : with regard to *this* indeed let ’em be put away out of Sight, and treated with Neglect, in point of Dependance or pleasing Reflection upon them ; nay, let ’em be even contemned, as worthless *Dung*, in Comparison with the Righteousness of CHRIST, the only reconciling and justifying Righteousness. In respect of this, the Apostle despis’d and repudiated every Thing of his own ; All went, that he might *win Christ, and be found in Him, not having for his Righteousness that which is of Law* : for he knew, there was no Law in Being, whose *Righteousness* could justify a morally imperfect Creature. Indeed the Law Man was originally placed under, had a Reference and Aptitude to the Design of *Justification* : but then it was the Justification of a *righteous and innocent*, not an apostate sinful Man ; so that upon the Loss of his Innocence, there was a Change of his Case, in point of Capacity to reach Justification by the *Deeds of the Law*. And whatever Degree of moral *Righteousness*, habitual or actual, any may recover by the Grace of God, yet it being ever defective, while in this World, and unequal to the Demands of the Law moral, it is consequently unequal to the Design of *justifying* him in the Eye of the Law. Only the Righteousness of Christ is adequate to the Law-Demand, and satisfactory to Divine Justice : therefore only this, imputed and received by Faith, is sufficient to *justify the Ungodly*. In point of *Justification* then good Works are by no Means to be the Object of our Confidence ; but the Righteousness of CHRIST alone is to engross our whole Trust and Regard : Yet this do’s not in the least argue, that good Works must be of no Account at all with us, in point of *Sanctification*. Tho’ contemptible in one View, mayn’t they be respectable in another ? Tho’ not at all influential to effect one Design, mayn’t they be subservient to another End ? It’s truly absurd to a high Degree, only because we maintain, that *our Righteousness* inherent, under the Respect of a *justifying* Righteousness (a Respect which it neither is calculated

lated nor intended for) and in Competition with Righteousness *imputed*, must have no Consideration with us, to infer, that therefore moral Virtue is under every other Respect to be of no Value with us, that good Works are not worthy of our Practice or Pursuit in any Regard; but only fit Objects of our Contempt, & deserving intirely to be cast out of our Care and Esteem. No, this is as far from being a genuine Consequence of our Doctrine, as it is distant from the Spirit and Disposition of a genuine *Protestant*. We are not for abandoning, but for cherishing the Love and Practice of *good Works*; tho' we decline trusting in them to recommend us to God, and intitle us to his saving Mercy. Nor did the Apostle, while disparaging his own Righteousness under the Name of *Leis* and *Dung*, mean to undervalue it in all Respects; and when he desires to be found in Christ, *not having his own Righteousness*, he do's not intend to suggest as if he were desirous to part with it, or willing to be dispossest'd of it, to lose what he had gain'd in point of Sanctification, and in that Respect to be found without it; no, by no Means: he only designs to express his Desire that he might be found at last *not having this* for his *justifying* Righteousness, but having a better Righteousness than his own, that wou'd effectually answer this blessed Purpose. Otherwise, for various excellent Purposes, he was bent upon diligently following every *good Work*, endeavouring that he might *perfect Holiness* in the Fear of God, and seeking after a *Righteousness according to Law*, as fully conformable to the moral Rule as possible in this imperfect State; and he long'd for Heaven with a View as much to the perfect Purity, as the perfect Rest and Happiness of that better Country. And this is the Principle, this the Spirit of the real *Protestant*. He loves the *Law* of God, and is alive to it as the Rule of moral Duty; while yet as a *Covenant* of Works, he is dead to it. And while making the Obedience of *Christ* his Trust, he also considers it as an Example for his Imitation, and desires to have the Image, as well as the Righteousness of Christ upon him: nor can content himself with an idle Profession of justifying Faith, but studies to *show his Faith by his Works*; and the more *strong in Faith*, the more *zealous of good Works*; the more CHRIST is *precious to them that believe*, the more hateful will Sin appear, and Holiness the more amiable in their Eyes; which Views will by a natural Efficacy put them upon shunning the one and following the other. Hence that Observation of the judicious Mr. WILLARD † "I am satisfy'd,

† Pref. to Dr. MATHER's *Evangel. Gosp.*

“ if the *Righteousness* of CHRIST were more prized by us, there
 “ wou’d be more of real *Holiness* among us.”

Upon the Whole, what little Ground then had the CARDINAL, whose Reasonings we’ve been examining, to conclude them with that insulting Reflection; “ Let [the *Protestant*] now go his Way and complain that we call him an *Enemy to good Works* !”

No, says the *Protestant* in Return, we detest the vile Character; and conscious of Innocence, we confront our injurious Accusers. We claim to be the truest *Friends*, and not at all *Enemies* to good Works, whether in point of Doctrine, or Disposition, Principle or Fact. Religiously we teach the Necessity, the Excellency, and the Usefulness of good Works; nor hold any Opinion, but what in its true Construction is friendly, not inimical to them. Indeed we renounce the undue Honours which our Adversaries claim for them, and are careful to have the Respects paid ’em duly regulated, conformably to the Scripture-Rule: Accordingly we consider good Works as the Fruit or Consequent of *Justification*, and don’t set them up as the Cause, the Reason or antecedent Condition of it; we don’t exalt ’em to a Rivalship with CHRIST’s *Righteousness*; we don’t set them in Competition with *Faith*: but still we value them in their proper Place and Order, & with Reference to their genuine Ends. We think it our bounden Duty, and an Ingredient of our Happiness, as well as becoming our Gospel-Profession, to be the genuine Lovers and Practisers of good Works. We recommend the Love and Practice of them to others. In Conformity to Scripture-Doctrine, we inculcate upon them that *have believed*, a Care to exhibit and evidence their *Faith*, by a *good Conversation in Christ*. Nor dare we flatter any in their Pretension to *justifying Faith*, while we see it contradicted by their habitual Neglect of holy Behaviour: for according to our Doctrine, the *Faith* which receives CHRIST for *Justification*, do’s also receive him for *Sanctification*; & not only apply’s his *Righteousness*, to cover our Sins, but his *Strength* to excite and enable us to *work Righteousness* our selves, to mortify our Lusts, to cleanse our Hands, and purify our Hearts, that we may glorify God in this World; and be prepared to enjoy Him in a better. How then can we justly be characteriz’d *Enemies to good Works*! Nay, but in Truth the foul Character belongs to those who are *Enemies of the Cross of Christ* and to *Faith in his Blood*; the one being the procuring Cause, and the other the producing Principle of good Works.---We close with the Words of Bp HALL *

* His WORKS, p. 316, 677. and his *Old Religion*, p. 40.

“ What

“ What is *Faith* (says he) but the *Hand* of the Soul ? What is
 “ the *Duty* of the Hand, but either to *hold* or *work* ? This *Hand*
 “ then holds *Christ*, and works *Obedience* and *Holiness*.---Let me
 “ sling this Stone into the brazen *Foreheads* of our *Adversaries*,
 “ which in their shameless *Challenges* of our Religion dare tell
 “ the *World*, that we are all for *Faith*, nothing for *Works*, and
 “ that we hold *Works* to *Salvation* as a *Parenthesis* to a *Clause*,
 “ that it may be *perfit* without them : *Heaven* and *Earth* shall
 “ witness to the *Injustice* of this *Calumniation*, and your *Con-*
 “ sciences shall be our *Compurgators* this *Day*, which shall
 “ testify to you, both now and on your *Death-Beds*, that we
 “ have taught you, there is no less *Necessity* of *good Works*,
 “ than if you should be saved by them ; and that altho’
 “ you cannot be saved by them, as the *meritorious Causes*
 “ of your *Glory*, yet you cannot be saved without them, as the
 “ necessary *Effects* of that *Grace* which brings *Glory*.--- Let
 “ the vain *Sophistry* of carnal *Minds* deceive it self with idle
 “ *Subtilties*, and seek to elude the plain *Truth* of *God*, with
 “ *Shifts* of *Wit* : We bless *God* for so clear a *Light*, and dare
 “ cast our *Souls* upon this sure *Evidence* of *God*.”

The APPLICATION of what has been said now remains.
 The Weight and Usefulness of the Subject would invite us to
 dwell still longer on it, by way of Reflection and Inference, in a
 Variety of Particulars, that might profitably be enlarg’d upon. But
 I must only suggest the following Hints ; which may the ra-
 ther suffice, as I’ve endeavour’d to throw a practical Light on
 the Argument all along thro’ the Discourse.

First, No Wonder then, that Ministers of more mature Judg-
 ment and Experience in Religion, have commonly laid out so
 much of their Labours in the Word upon that great Evangelical
 Subject, the *Righteousness* of CHRIST, made ours by the Donation
 of God and the Application of *Faith* ; and when on any moral
 Subject, that they have study’d discreetly to assign it’s due Place
 in Christian Divinity, and to point out the true Principles of ac-
 ceptable Obedience, refer it to it’s genuine Ends, and inculcate
 a humble Dependance on CHRIST both for *Righteousness* and
Strength, while they urged the Pursuit of personal Holiness. ---
 It has risen from a Consciousness of their own Imperfection and
 Insufficiency, from a dutiful Regard for the Honour of the Re-
 deemer, and a tender Care for the Salvation of Souls.

Again, How solicitous should all Ministers (pretending to the
 Character of *Protestant*) be, that in preaching on moral Themes
 they well regulate, methodize and guard their Discourses, lest any
 He:re

Hearer should thro' their Heterodoxy or Carelessness get a Snare to his Soul ? Here, omitting all that my own Tho'ts might suggest, I shall only ask your Attention to what that venerable Father in our Israel, the late Mr. WILLARD, says in his judicious and faithful Sermon, intitled, *Morality not to be rely'd on for Life* ; where having among other Things observ'd, touching " the " Influence Faith has into our moral Obedience, That it makes " us apprehensive we can be accepted only in the BELOVED, " That it makes us confess with the Church (Isa. 64. 6.) *All our " Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*, and to profess with Paul " (Phil. 3. 8.) *I count all Things but Loss and Dung that I may " win Christ* ; " He begins the Application of his excellent Discourse with this Inference, which I shall repeat intire, as worthy of our solemn Consideration, and what may be, if I mistake not, a Word in Season. " Hence (says he) what Caution bad " Gospel-Ministers need to use in their preaching up of moral Duties ? That it is their Duty to preach them and press them " upon their Hearers, is certain ; otherwise they cannot be " faithful in declaring the whole Counsel of God : And yet, if they " so preach them as to revive the Covenant of Works, to advance " the Righteousness of Man, and depreciate the Righteousness of " CHRIST, they are far from being the Ministers of CHRIST, " and are indeed the Betrayers of Souls, as far as in them lieth. " Nor indeed (says he) do I know of any Thing which doth " more threaten the Undermining of true Christianity and the " bringing in of another Gospel, than the putting of moral Virtues into a Legal Dress, and without any more Ado to commend them to us as the Graces of our Christian Religion. He " who when he hath told Men all the moral Duties required in " the Law of God, and laid them out according to their Nature, " as they were enjoined on them in the First Covenant, saith " to them, *This do and live* ; and doth not endeavour to shew " them that there is something more wanting, without which " they are undone, will be found an Enemy of Grace and a " Murderer of Souls : Nor would I have such a Minister's Account to give in the last Day, for a Thousand Worlds."

Further, From what has been discours'd, we learn our Obligations of Gratitude to the God of all Grace for his infinite Compassion towards us, in providing so happily for our justification before him, by sending his dear Son to bring in everlasting Righteousness, the grand Relief of a guilty World.--- And what has been said, teaches us to admire the Wisdom of God, in not completing the Sanctification of his People at present ; that so the Righteousness

Righteousness which is of God by Faith, might have its due Honours reserv'd to it, and the Riches of Divine Grace appear the more conspicuous in the Saint's eternal Salvation.--- Hereby also we learn the *Importance* of yielding a firm Credit and serious Attention to those peculiar Doctrines of Revelation, concerning *Original Sin, imputed Righteousness, Justification by Faith only, the Sovereignty of God in Salvation, &c.* Doctrines so clearly exhibited in the Scriptures, and striking directly at that *Self-Righteousness*, or Self-Confidence, and spiritual Pride, so hazardous and so natural to vain Man.-- We learn likewise the Necessity there was of the *Protestant Reformation*; the Unreasonableness and Dangerousness of the present *Defection* from it (in Point both of Opinion & Practice) so visibly prevalent in many Parts of the World call'd *Reformed*; and the Improbability of a general Revival of the *Protestant* Interest, without a general Revival of the true *Protestant* Spirit and Principles.-- We moreover learn the *pitiable Case* of Multitudes of Souls in the Christian World, that are under the Disadvantage of having no other or little better than *Papish* Guides; who by their corrupt, unfaithful, or unskilful Ministry sooth and flatter them in a Way of *Self-Righteousness*, cherishing the Spirit of the *Old Covenant* and thwarting that of the *New*, to the no little Hazard of their eternal Interests.

Again, We have awful Ground from what has been said, to fear, that the *Number* of true Believers in the professing World, is comparatively very *small*; in that Multitudes discover a prevalent Spirit and Principle the Reverse of that of the *Prophet* and *Apostle*, whose Examples were recorded for our Admonition; and so few appear heartily concurring to the Saints united Confession in Disparagement of *their own Righteousness*.--- We shall do wisely to *examine* into our own Sentiment and Disposition of Heart concerning *our own Righteousness*, and very seriously inquire whether we have the *same Mind* in us, as was in these humble Saints, whose *Renunciations* of their own Righteousness we've been reflecting upon.-- And such as are conscious they were never bro't to look upon *their own Righteousness* as *filthy Rags* or as *Dung*, and accordingly to renounce it in Point of Dependence upon it for *Justification of Life*, may by the Light of those Examples in our Text see their *Pride* and *Self-Confidence* detected and condemned.-- These Examples read Lessons of *Reproof* to the *Children of God*, who are often too indulgent to Unbelief and spiritual Pride, sad Remains whereof in various Degrees are found even in the Regenerate; but much more to self-deluding *Hypocrites*, who (notwithstanding all their seeming Experiences & moral Re-

finements) are still unhappy Strangers to that Faith and Self-denial requir'd in the Gospel, and are under the full Dominion of spiritual Pride and Unbelief; and most of all to those *gross* Dissemblers in Religion, who consciously live in the habitual Practice of Sin, but for a Disguise put on a Profession of Godliness and make a Shew of virtuous Action, in some particular Instances. If the *real* Righteousnesses of truly good Men, by Reason of their Imperfections, are comparatively but as *Dung* or *filthy Rags*, much more so are the heartless Duties of unregenerate Moralists, and still more so the *feigned* Righteousnesses of designing *Hypocrites*. Prov. 21. 27. *The Sacrifice of the Wicked is Abomination: How much more when he bringeth it with a wicked Mind?* --- But still how much more abominable and filthy is *Unrighteousness* or *Wickedness* itself! How malignant an Evil is *Sin*, that stains and blemishes the very *Righteousnesses* of Saints! How odious and pernicious then is *reigning Sin*! more so than the *Poison of Asps*, which can but kill the Body, when Sin destroys the precious Soul! But above all, what a dreadful Sin is habitual and final *Unbelief*, which binds on the Guilt of other Sins and the Curse of the Law, and consigns the Sinner over to eternal Damnation, without a Remedy! *The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law.* How vile the Character, how miserable the State, of the unrenew'd and unpardon'd Sinner!

But to conclude,

Let what has been said awaken us all to a just Concern, *that we may win Christ, and be found in him; not having for our Righteousness that which is of Law* (inherent in our selves and imperfect) *but that which is of God by Faith.* Let us often review the Examples of the Prophet and Apostle, and learn of them to renounce *our own* defective *Righteousnesses*, as *filthy Rags* and as *Dung*, comparatively to CHRIST's spotless perfect Righteousness, and relatively to *Justification of Life.* A deep abiding Conviction of this great Truth will have a happy Tendency, to make Christ precious to us, and excite us to live by the Faith of the Son of God; to raise our Admiration of the Love of God in Christ, and inspire us with humble Gratitude; to fill us with self-abasing Thoughts, and make us humble in all our Approaches to the Throne of Grace; to put us upon justifying God in his afflictive Dispensations, and being contented with all the Allotments of his holy Providence; to teach us Charity, Meekness and Forbearance towards our Fellow-Christians; and, in a Word, to inflame our Desires after another and better Country, even an heavenly, where our personal Righteousness shall no more be polluted

luted and disgraced by the Remains of Sin, but be perfect and immaculate as that of the Angels of God, and we shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of our heavenly Father.-- Let us therefore be much in studying this profitable Subject, and much in Prayer to God, that he would open our Understandings to understand the Scriptures, referring to this important Point of Truth, and give us, of his Grace, to feel the Force & experience the Benefit of an effectual Persuasion: that a *self-righteous* Spirit may be subdu'd in us, and a humble *Faith* towards our Lord Jesus Christ may be ingenerated, invigorated, and actuated in us by the Power of the Holy Ghost, and made to exert its Influence upon us, for the daily increasing Mortification of Sin and Self, and for the promoting a Life of Communion with Christ and Devotedness to him, as well as Dependance upon him.-- For we should always be mindful, that Christ is the Object of our *Obedience*, as well as of our Faith; and that he is of God made unto us, not only *Righteousness*, but *Sanctification*. While therefore, in Comparison of imputed Righteousness & in Reference to Justification before God, we renounce all our own imperfect Righteousness as *Dung* and as *filthy Rags*, yet nevertheless let us at the same Time be careful to preserve and express a due Honour and Regard for *personal Holiness*, as valuable on other Accounts and useful for other Ends. Let us not fail to realize the Stability of the moral Law as a Rule of humane Life, our indispensable Obligation to Obedience, and the absolute Necessity of practical Godliness and Honesty; tho' not with any View to our acquiring a Right to Pardon and Peace with God, yet with a View to the Glory of God concern'd therein, with a View to our being *meet for the Master's Use* here and for his blissful Presence hereafter, and with a View to evidencing the Sincerity of our *Faith*, and so the Truth of our Pretension to be at *Peace with God*: Because, as it is the Office of Faith to apply Christ's Righteousness for *Justification*, so it is the Nature of Faith to rely on his Strength and Grace for *Sanctification*, and by Motives from the Love of Christ to constrain us to Obedience. So that if our Faith be not such as purifies the Heart and works by Love, it wants the essential Characters of a true *justifying Faith*.--- As therefore we would follow *Holiness* to any Purpose, let us in the first Place be solicitous to obtain like *precious Faith* with that of the Apostles and Prophets and other Scripture-Saints, who of old thro' *Faith wrought Righteousness*, while yet at the same Time they thro' Faith sought Justification by CHRIST'S *Righteousness* only, and renounc'd all Hope of Acceptance and Reward merely on Account of *their own Righteousness*.--

Righteousness.--- As a Means to strengthen our *Faith*, and so to promote our *Obedience*, by invigorating it's most effectual *Principle*, let us with a Dependance on the *Spirit of Holiness* for his necessary Influence, be much in meditating and applying the *Truth which is after Godliness*, one Article whereof is that which has been employing our Tho'ts.

It is a remarkable Passage, to our Purpose, that in *TIT. 3. 8.* *These Things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works: these Things are good and profitable unto Men.* The Apostle had just before been opening the Doctrine of Grace, in some of its most important Branches, and these Things which he had now been saying, he would have *Titus* to confirm and inculcate in his Ministry, to the End that Believers might by these Truths be put upon a Care to excell in good Works.---With this View then, let us be much in meditating upon this Doctrine, firmly believe, and wisely apply it. Let us pursue it to its genuine Purposes, to establish our *Faith* in Christ, and thereby to promote our *Obedience*: which indeed, if it be not the *Obedience of Faith*, will neither be pleasing to God nor profitable to us. Faith must be the Principle of all our Duties: Faith must begin & carry them on: and when we have done our best, "we must carry them to Christ (as Mr. WILLARD expresses it) that they may be offer'd up with his sweet Incense, and that so the Dung of them may not procure them to be rejected."

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, Make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.

A M E N.





